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Rough Guide DIRECTIONS

# Amsterdam

VISIT…

# Amsterdam

## DIRECTIONS

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## Introduction to

# Amsterdam

**Amsterdam is the perfect city for a short visit or a weekend break. It's easy on the eye, with plenty (but not too much) to see; it's compact enough to explore mainly on foot; just about everyone speaks good-to-fluent English, and more often than not more than a smattering of French and German as well; and, last but not least, it's a city that likes to party.**

But there's much more to Amsterdam than that. It's a thoughtful city, with a long-standing liberal tradition that has given it a distinctive character, beginning with the obvious – the legalized prostitution and dope-smoking coffeeshops – through to the more subtle, encapsulated by Amsterdammers themselves in the Dutch word *gezellig*, which roughly corresponds to a combination of "cosy", "lived-in" and "warmly convivial". Nowhere is this more applicable than in the city's unparalleled selection

## When to visit

Amsterdam enjoys a fairly standard temperate climate, with warm, if characteristically mild summers and moderately cold and wet winters. The climate is certainly not severe enough to make very much difference to the city's routines, which makes Amsterdam an ideal all-year destination. That said, high summer – roughly late June to August – sees the city's parks packed to the gunnels and parts of the centre almost overwhelmed by tourists, whereas spring and autumn are not too crowded and can be especially beautiful, with mist hanging over the canals and low sunlight beaming through the cloud cover. Indeed, Amsterdam has more than its fair share of cloudy days at any time of the year, but even in January and February, when things can be at their gloomiest, there are compensations – wet cobbles glistening under the street lights and the canals rippled by falling raindrops. In the summer, from around June to August, mosquitoes can be bothersome. At any time of the year, but particularly in summer, try to book your accommodation well in advance.

△ Shop in the "Nine Streets", the Grachtengordel

of *gezellig* drinking establishments, whether you choose a traditional brown café or one of the newer designer places. The city is also riding something of a resurgent wave, with dozens of great new restaurants, a vibrant arts scene, including the brand-new Muziekgebouw, and a club scene that has come of age recently.

The layout of the city is determined by a web of canals radiating out from an historical core to loop right round the centre in a "Girdle of Canals", the Grachtengordel. This planned, seventeenth-century extension to the medieval town makes for a uniquely elegant urban environment, with tall gabled houses reflected in black-green waters, a world away from the traf-

fic and noise of many other European city centres. These charms are supplemented by a string of first-rate attractions, most notably the Anne Frank Huis, the Rijksmuseum, with its wonderful collection of Dutch paintings, including several of Rembrandt's finest works, and the peerless Van Gogh Museum, with the world's largest collection of the artist's work.

▽ Gabled house in the Grachtengordel

# Amsterdam
## AT A GLANCE

▲ Centraal Station

### THE OLD CENTRE

Amsterdam's old centre is the city's busiest quarter, with the notorious Red Light District at its heart. It has to be seen, but it's worth bearing in mind that this is a business – rather than a tourist – district, with a solid bedrock of sleaze beneath the fun veneer.

### GRACHTENGORDEL

The ultimate in thoughtful city planning, the Grachtengordel – basically the ring of canals that was dug around the medieval centre in the seventeenth century – tripled the city in size, and made Amsterdam what it is today. When anyone thinks of the city, it is these elegant waterways, criss-crossed by bridges, and flanked by tall quirkily gabled houses, that they have in mind.

▼ Seven Bridges

### THE JORDAAN AND WESTERN DOCKLANDS

In many ways this is the city centre's most appealing and restful area, with some of the most graceful stretches of the main canals together with the more ramshackle

small waterways of the Jordaan, and the tall warehouses of the former harbour area. All without trams and traffic.

▲ Brouwersgracht houses

## OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

Amsterdam's Jewish Quarter is not what it was – most of its inhabitants were deported during the Nazi occupation, and it's been unsympathetically redeveloped since then. But it holds a few fascinating corners of Jewish and wartime history as well as some key one-off attractions like the Rembrandthuis and the city's zoo.

## MUSEUM QUARTER

Unsurprisingly, this area, just south of the city centre proper, is home to the cream of Amsterdam's museums. It is also one of the city's plusher neighbourhoods, with leafy streets, apartment blocks and upscale shops and restaurants – and some of the best of the city's moderately priced hotels.

## THE OUTER DISTRICTS

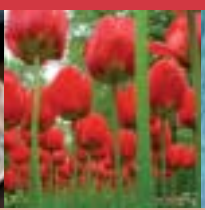
There's not a lot to take you into Amsterdam's outer districts, except perhaps for the increasingly gentrified De Pijp neighbourhood – worth visiting for its vibrant daily market and growing number of cool bars and restaurants.

## OUTSIDE AMSTERDAM

Don't forget that Holland is a small country and that there are plenty of compelling attractions very close at hand – not least the small town of Haarlem, with the great Frans Hals Museum, and the stunning Keukenhof Gardens, among others.

▲ Joods Historisch Museum

# Ideas



# The big six

Amsterdam isn't a city of major sights; its pleasures lie in wandering the streets at a leisurely pace more than targeting specific attractions. However, if you really want to get the most out of your visit, there are a number of things you really shouldn't leave town without seeing, ranging from the high cultural hit of the Van Gogh Museum to the full-on sleaze of the Red Light District.

### ▼ Anne Frank Huis

The secret annexe in which the famous teenage diarist hid with her family during the Nazi occupation is perhaps the city's most popular – and most moving – tourist attraction.

P.70 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

### ▼ Queen's Day

The city's biggest annual event by far, during which everyone takes to the streets and waterways in a massively joyful celebration of being Dutch. A day like no other, and as such worth planning a trip around if you can.

P.151 ▸ ESSENTIALS

## ▲ Royal Palace

The supreme architectural example of the Dutch empire at the height of its powers.

**P.51** ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▲ Rijksmuseum

Still closed for a major restoration, but the city's greatest museum by far, featuring everything from paintings to furniture and applied arts. For the moment you can see the best of its paintings in the building's Philips Wing.

**P.108** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

## ▼ Red Light District

Too steeped in the art of titillation to be truly shocking these days, but Amsterdam's red light district is still the real thing – and a big attraction in its own right.

**P.52** ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

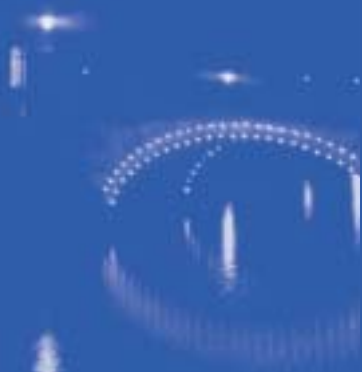
## ▼ Van Gogh Museum

With the world's most comprehensive collection of the artist's work, this museum is simply unmissable.

**P.110** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

# Canalside Amsterdam

Amsterdam's canals are its most distinctive feature, and you could spend many happy hours strolling from one to the other. Herengracht, Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht are the largest and best-known canals, girdling the city centre since they were added in the seventeenth century. Their gabled houses and numerous bridges are the Amsterdam you see in all the photos – and help to make Amsterdam such a distinctive and beautiful city.



### ▲ Golden Bend

The most opulent, though perhaps not the most characteristic, row of canalhouses in the city.

P.74 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

### ▲ Eastern Islands

This up-and-coming district has lots of waterside bars and restaurants to while away the evening by – or on – the water.

P.102 ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

## ◀ Leliegracht

One of the most charming of the radial stretches of water that connect the main canals.

**P.70** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▼ Groenburgwal

Small dead-end canal right in the centre that is a lovely place to drink on a summer evening.

**P.56** ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▶ The Sluyswacht

This bar in a rickety old lock-keeper's house is a wonderful place to drink and watch the water.

**P.106** ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

## ▼ Brouwersgracht

The former warehouses of this canal make it one of the city's most picturesque.

**P.66** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

# Shopping

Variety is the essence of Amsterdam shopping. The city doesn't score particularly highly when it comes to big department stores and branches of the big-name designers, but it has a fantastic array of small stores specializing in everything from condoms to beads, all making for fantastic browsing between sights. Amsterdam also has some great markets, from the famous flea market on Waterlooplein to smaller, more impromptu affairs selling flowers, books, organic produce, even pets. Devising a walk between the city's markets is a nice way of exploring the city centre.

**▲ PC Hooftstraat**

The city's most upscale shopping street, home to all of the big designer names.

**P.113** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

**▲ Bloemenmarkt**

This floating flower and plant market is a delight – and much cheaper than you might be used to back home.

**P.77** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▼ Albert Cuypstraat market

Busy general market that is still to some extent the authentic heart of working-class Amsterdam.

**P.120** ▸ THE OUTER DISTRICTS

## ▲ Condomerie Het Gulden Vlies

The ultimate specialist shop, and a useful one too, with a mind-boggling array of prophylactics.

**P.59** ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▼ The Nine Streets

The nine streets that run between the main canals of Westermarkt and Leidsegracht host some of the city's quirkiest and most interesting one-off shops.

**P.72** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▶ Waterlooplein

This flea market isn't what it was, but can still be a great source of clothing bargains.

**P.96** ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

# Museums and galleries

The Dutch do art galleries better than most, and Amsterdam's house the prodigious output of the city's seventeenth-century Golden Age – Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Vermeer – as well as the work of Van Gogh and the modern movement. They're one of the highlights of the city, though sadly its greatest gallery – the Rijksmuseum – is closed for a long-term restoration. The city excels with its museums too – a huge variety, from restored aristocratic houses to museums devoted to history, science, shipping and ethnography. Bear in mind that most, especially those that are state-run, are shut on Mondays.

### ▼ CoBrA Museum

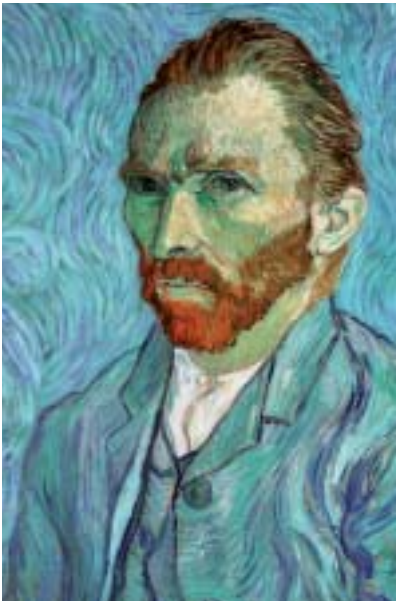
This cool, modern museum hosts the art of the post-war CoBrA movement – made up of artists from Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam.

P.122 ▸ THE OUTER DISTRICTS

### ▼ Van Gogh Museum

Not only the greatest collection of prints and paintings by Van Gogh, but also the nineteenth-century paintings and Japanese prints that influenced him.

P.110 ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK



## ▲ Rijksmuseum

Only partly open for the moment, but it's the place to see the best of the city's collection of seventeenth-century Dutch art.

**P.108** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

## ▶ Amsterdams Historisch Museum

The civic guard portraits of the Schuttersgalerij provide an excellent introduction to this museum devoted to the life and times of the city.

**P.58** ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▲ Verzetsmuseum

This museum brilliantly charts the history of the Dutch resistance to the Nazis through a mixture of exhibits.

**P.102** ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

## ▼ Museum Van Loon

The best-preserved seventeenth-century canal house in the city.

**P.76** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

# Bars

Drinking your way around Amsterdam isn't such a bad way of passing the time. There's a bar on every corner, and they make good places to linger over a coffee or nurse a beer and read the paper, with a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere whether you're a local or a tourist. They tend to be open all day, usually until late at night, and there are lots to choose from, ranging from traditional brown cafés – named for the colour of their walls, stained by years of tobacco smoke – to modern bars with a cool ambience. *Proost!*

### ▲ De Jaren

Huge modern café for people-watching and newspaper-browsing.

P.64 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

### ▲ De Reiger

Perhaps the best bar in a neighbourhood that is full of good places to drink.

P.93 ▸ THE JORDAAN AND WESTERN DOCKLANDS

## ▼ 11

Sprawling bar-restaurant whose minimalist decor continues to attract a determinedly hip crowd.

**P.106** ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

## ▲ Wynand Fockink

The city's best example of an old-fashioned *proeflokaal* or "tasting-house".

**P.65** ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▶ Het Molenpad

A fairly typical brown café, very informal and full of locals.

**P.82** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▼ 't Smalle

One of the city's oldest cafés, with a lovely waterside terrace.

**P.93** ▸ THE JORDAAN AND WESTERN DOCKLANDS

# Restaurants

Amsterdam is not a gourmet city, but there have always been great places to eat, and the quality and number of establishments has risen over recent years. Whether it's hearty Dutch food, great fish or Indonesian specialities, you can eat superbly well if you know where to go. We've picked some of the city's more special and consequently more expensive restaurants, but there are plenty of more affordable places too.

### ▼ Damsteeg

The lovely interior of this restaurant is complemented by the excellent French food.

P.80 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

### ▲ Christophe

Michelin-starred restaurant whose food and ambience don't disappoint.

P.80 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

### ▲ Yamazato

A bit of a trek if you're not staying out in the New South, but the Japanese food here is as good as it gets.

P.124 ▸ THE OUTER DISTRICTS

### ▼ De Belhamel

Great-value Dutch cooking on picturesque Brouwersgracht.

P.80 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

### ▼ Claes Claesz

A good place to sample proper Dutch food at moderate prices.

P.91 ▸ THE JORDAAN AND WESTERN DOCKLANDS

# Coffeeshops

Art, architecture and canals aside, many visitors to Amsterdam come for just one thing: drugs. Amsterdam remains one of the few cities in the world where you can smoke a joint in public. The places that you can do this – Amsterdam's euphemistically titled "coffeeshops" – are strictly controlled places that sell a wide variety of hash and grass in neat cellophane packets; they also sell spacecake (though aren't supposed to) as well as an array of soft drinks and occasionally alcohol. The purchase and consumption of up to 5g of cannabis, and possession of up to 30g (the legal limit) are tolerated rather than legal – though it's unlikely that anything bad will happen to you if you step outside these limits.

▲ **Siberië**

Very relaxed and informal coffeeshop, slightly off the beaten tourist path.

**P.79** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

▲ **Greenhouse**

Well-known for the quality of its offerings.

**P.123** ▸ THE OUTER DISTRICTS

## ▼ Kadinsky

Chocolate chip cookies, good jazz and dope – what more could you want?

P.61 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▼ Dampkring

Loud and friendly city-centre hangout.

P.60 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▲ Abraxas

Cosy coffeeshop with an air of the orient about it.

P.60 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▲ Rusland

Coffeeshop is something of a misnomer for a place that's as well known for its tea as its dope.

P.61 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

# Budget accommodation

For those on a tight budget, Amsterdam's array of places offering dormitory accommodation is second to none – from official HI establishments to unofficial private hostels and even Christian hostels. Most will provide clean linen for a few euros extra or you should bring your own sleeping bag. Many also lock their guests out during the day, and there is sometimes a nightly curfew, though these are often late enough as to make no difference.

### ▼ Bulldog

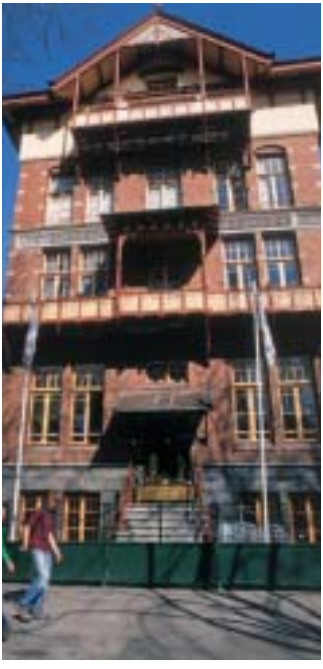
Part of the coffeeshop chain, with everything from dorm beds to luxury apartments.

P.143 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

### ▼ Stay Okay Vondelpark

The best of the city's official hostels.

P.144 ▸ ACCOMMODATION



### ▲ Flying Pig Uptown

Well-maintained private hostel whose best branch is near the Vondelpark.

P.144 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

### ▶ Shelter Jordaan

Clean, friendly Christian hostel with some of the best-value beds in the city, in a great location in the heart of the Jordaan.

P.144 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

### ▲ Hans Brinker

Very well-established and well-run hostel.

P.144 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

### ▼ Winston

Not really a hostel, but the price of its double rooms make it only slightly more expensive.

P.139 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

# Green Amsterdam

Perhaps because it is laced by canals, Amsterdam isn't an especially green city, but it does have one great city-centre green space in the Vondelpark, and any number of other verdant attractions on its limits or just outside. We've picked out some of the best places to take a break within in the city centre, as well as one – the Keukenhof Gardens – that is worth heading outside the city for.

**▲ Vondelpark**

The leafy Vondelpark, with its ponds, footpaths and colony of parrots, is the city centre's largest and most attractive park by a mile.

**P.112** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

## ▲ Amsterdamse Bos

The city's largest open space by far, encircling the southern edge of the city with its forests and lakes.

**P.121** ▸ THE OUTER DISTRICTS

## ▼ Hortus Botanicus

This is a peaceful oasis in the heart of the city.

**P.100** ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

## ▲ The Begijnhof

Not really a green space, and not really a place to linger either, but you couldn't ask for a more inviting, or more central, retreat from the city maelstrom.

**P.57** ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▼ Keukenhof Gardens

The largest flower garden in the world – bar none. Well worth the trip out if you're here at the right time of year.

**P.128** ▸ DAY-TRIPS FROM AMSTERDAM

# Clubbers' Amsterdam

Clubbing in Amsterdam is quite a thing these days. There are a good array of decent venues playing house and techno and plenty of bars with regular DJs, as well as a number of happening clubs on the outskirts of the city that come and go – see flyers and posters in bars for details. Most places open at about 10pm – though no one turns up much before midnight – and close around 5am, and charge €10 or so to get in, often less during the week.

### ▼ Exit

Well-established and popular gay nightclub, featuring dancers and DJs. Only open weekends but this place usually features somewhere on most young, gay men's social calendar.

P.83 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▲ Jimmy Woo

East meets West at this loungey club, where the stylish come out to play and the dance-floor heaves to the sound of disco and club classics.

P.83 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ◀ Nachttheater Sugar Factory

Amsterdam's so-called "night theatre", featuring a dizzying programme of events six days a week. Expect music, DJs, poetry and performance, sometimes twice in one evening.

P.84 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▼ Odeon

Over the years this club has enjoyed many incarnations, with many a famous face passing through its doors. Superbly restored, and featuring a restaurant, bar and brasserie, it's still pulling in the punters.

P.84 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▲ Arena

"Tonight" club at *Arena*, one of the city's trendiest hotels, features a well-respected line-up of international DJs and club nights housed within a beautifully restored chapel.

P.125 ▸ THE OUTER DISTRICTS

30

# Kids' Amsterdam

With its canals, bikes and trams, Amsterdam can be entertaining enough for some kids, but there are also several attractions aimed specifically at children, ranging from long-established places like the zoo – rated as one of the best in Europe – to circuses, ice-skating and city farms. Otherwise just rent a bike, or a canal bike, and take to the streets or water.

**▲ Artis Zoo**

Unusually airy and open for an old city-centre zoo.

P.101 ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

### ▼ NEMO

Hands-on and interactive science museum.

P.104 ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

### ▼ Kindermuseum (Tropenmuseum)

Ethnographic exhibits for kids – worthy but fun.

P.122 ▸ THE OUTER DISTRICTS

### TunFun

This unassuming indoor playground is an underground Aladdin's cave for 1–12 year-olds of inflatables, slides and things you can bounce on. Be warned, you may never see light again.

P.99 ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

### ▲ Kinderkookcafé

Yes, really, this is an entire restaurant run by children.

P.114 ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

# Dutch art

The Netherlands in the seventeenth century not only saw a massive economic upturn, but also an explosion of creativity to match, with painters and sculptors queuing up to record the buildings, the landscapes and above all the people who made the Dutch Golden Age what it was. Amsterdam is a great place to see the best of the art of the period, with examples of the work of all the great artists, from the penetrating portraits of Rembrandt and Frans Hals to the riotous tavern and domestic scenes of Jan Steen and the calm chamber pieces of Vermeer.

### ▼ Feast of St Nicolaas

Jan Steen is perhaps the most admired painter of Dutch "genre" scenes of the country's peasantry at play.

**P.110** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

### ▼ The Jewish Bride

Rembrandt's study of marriage and duty – and love and tenderness.

**P.110** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

## ▲ Civic Guard portraits

These portraits were vanity works for the great and the good who got together ostensibly to defend the homeland against the Spanish.

**P.58** ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▲ The Night Watch

Rembrandt's take on the civic guard portrait is probably his most famous painting ever.

**P.110** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

## ▼ Young Woman Reading a Letter

Vermeer's skill with natural light, and the relatively few paintings he produced, have made him perhaps the most popular Dutch painter in modern times.

**P.110** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

## ▼ Marriage Portrait of Isaac Massa

Frans Hals was arguably the most naturally gifted and original of all Dutch portraitists, bar Rembrandt.

**P.110** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

# Architecture

Amsterdam's architecture is not of the huge, monumental variety. Long a republic, it doesn't boast palaces built to glorify its rulers. Rather, like the rest of the Netherlands, its interest lies in the domestic, in the houses that were built for the wealthy burghers of the Dutch Republic, and the details that lie therein. Some have been preserved and are open to visitors; others host homes and businesses, and you have to be content admiring them from the outside. The city has some interesting examples of twentieth-century architecture too, principally from the so-called Amsterdam School – whose style employed playful motifs and details in a modern context – as well as the odd example of the Art Deco and Art Nouveau.

### ▼ Cromhouthuizen

Elegant seventeenth-century houses, built with all the soberness and frivolity of the age.

**P.67** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

### ▼ American Hotel

The city's Art Nouveau masterpiece, now sadly renovated inside apart from its marvellous café.

**P.73** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▲ Beurs van Berlage

Clean, simple classic of the Dutch modern movement.

P.50 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▲ Scheepvaarthuis

Extravagantly decorated with all things nautical – a good example of the decorative Amsterdam School.

P.54 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▼ Het Schip

Classic apartment building of the Amsterdam School.

P.89 ▸ THE JORDAAN AND WESTERN DOCKLANDS

## ▼ Tuschinski

Extraordinarily well-preserved Art Deco cinema.

P.77 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▼ Huis Bartolotti

One of the most handsome houses built on Herengracht during the Golden Age.

P.72 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

# Churches

Amsterdam's skyline is punctured by the spires of its numerous churches. However, they're not one of the major attractions in this most Calvinist of cities. Some have been deconsecrated, and the interiors of the rest are plain and simple affairs more devoted to the practicalities of worship than extolling the glories of God. But they are worth visiting for just that, their soaring Gothic lines often accentuated by their spartan interiors. There are oddities, too, not least the Amstelkring – a secret church worked into the interior of a conventional canal house.

▲ **Noorderkerk**

The most spartan of Amsterdam's seventeenth-century churches.

**P.87** ▸ THE JORDAAN AND WESTERN DOCKLANDS

## ▼ Amstelkring

Once a clandestine church for the city's Catholics, the seventeenth-century house chapel is one of the city's most distinctive sights.

P.53 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▲ Nieuwe Kerk

Despite its name, Nieuwe Kerk is a fifteenth-century Gothic affair that is now used for state occasions and exhibitions.

P.51 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▼ Westerkerk

Amsterdam is celebrated for its soaring church spires, and this is one of its most striking.

P.70 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▲ Oude Kerk

Ancient Gothic church with fantastic sixteenth-century stained glass windows.

P.52 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

# Food and drink

Dutch food traditionally tends to be higher in carbs than imagination, but it's beginning to reinvent itself, with a lot of restaurants rediscovering forgotten specialities or just using local fresh ingredients in an imaginative way. There are some good odd streetfood delicacies that are worth trying too, and of course Dutch beer and gin are long-standing and reliable standbys.

## ▼ Indonesian food

Don't leave Amsterdam without trying one of its Indonesian restaurants – the most positive legacy of its colonial past.

P.80 ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

## ▼ Beer

You can of course buy the Heineken and Grolsch you find everywhere, as well as a number of lesser known regional brews such as Dommelsch and Bavaria. An essential stop for the beer enthusiast is of course the Heineken brewery, now a fully fledged shrine to the beverage.

P.117 ▸ THE OUTER DISTRICTS

## ▲ Fish stalls

The fried fish, pickled herrings, eels and other fishy treats on sale at plentiful street stalls make a great on-the-move option for lunch.

P.124 ▸ THE OUTER DISTRICTS

## ▲ Jenever

Dutch gin is milder than the British variety: drink it *oud* (smooth), *jong* (sharper) or in a host of different fruit flavours – delicious.

P.65 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▼ Frites

With mayonnaise, curry sauce or a host of other choices.

P.61 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

## ▼ Cheese

Dutch cheese needs no introduction, and you'll find it much better here than the rubbery stuff you might be used to at home.

P.78 ▸ THE OLD CENTRE

# Hotels

Accommodation in Amsterdam can be a major expense, but the city's compactness at least means that it is easy to stay somewhere central, even on a tight budget. Obviously the nicest thing to do is stay on one of the city's canals, preferably in a room facing the water, and there are some great places that you can do this. You'll pay a premium for the location, but when you wake up you'll know that you couldn't be anywhere else in the world. Look out also for the cool boutique hotels that are opening up all the time in a city that has traditionally been short of hotel rooms.

### ▲ College

Sited in an old school, and part run by college students, this is one of the slickest new hotels in town.

P.142 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

### ▲ Dylan

Part of the style-conscious Stein group, this has elegantly modern rooms and suites in a seventeenth-century canal house.

P.139 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

### ▼ Hotel de l'Europe

Grand old hotel that is perhaps the city centre's most luxurious option.

P.138 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

### ▲ Seven Bridges

A Rough Guide favourite, this moderately priced hotel has a great canalside location.

P.140 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

### ▼ Lloyd

Housed in a former immigrant hostel and prison, this is an arts centre and hotel in one, and has rooms in all price ranges, from one- to five-star.

P.141 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

### ▲ Toren

Lovely, moderately priced canal house hotel.

P.140 ▸ ACCOMMODATION

# Musical Amsterdam

Amsterdam's music scene is in fine fettle. It has recently opened a fantastic new concert hall, and there's no shortage of classical music concerts, with two major orchestras based in the city, plus regular visits by touring outfits. Some of the city's churches host regular concerts, and there is top-notch opera, too, at the Muziektheater and Stadsschouwburg, as well as a couple of old favourite rock venues that regularly host top touring bands.

### ▼ Muziektheater

Home to the Netherlands Opera and National Ballet.

**P.95** ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

### ▼ Muziekgebouw

Amsterdam's brand new auditorium, a venue for classical music and dance.

**P.107** ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

## ▲ Bimhuis

Amsterdam's premier jazz venue, newly rehoused next door to the Muziekgebouw.

**P.107** ▸ THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER AND EASTERN DOCKLANDS

## ▲ Concertgebouw

Home to the eponymous orchestra, and generally reckoned to have some of the best acoustics in the world.

**P.111** ▸ THE MUSEUM QUARTER AND THE VONDELPARK

## ▼ Paradiso

The city's best venue for visiting rock bands.

**P.84** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

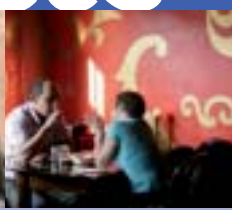
## ▼ Melkweg

This Sixties favourite remains the city's prime venue for inventive and original performing arts.

**P.83** ▸ THE GRACHTENGORDEL

HOLLAND

# Places



INTERNATIONAL
BUDGET
HOSTEL
THE GALLERY
HOSTEL

# The Old Centre

**Amsterdam's most vivacious and arguably most touristy district, the Old Centre is an oval-shaped tangle of antique streets and narrow canals that is confined in the north by the River IJ and to the west and south by the Singel, the first of several canals that once girdled the entire city. Given the dominance of Centraal Station on most transport routes, this is where you'll almost certainly arrive. From here a stroll across the bridge will take you onto the Damrak, which divided the Oude Zijde (Old Side) of the medieval city to the east from the smaller Nieuwe Zijde (New Side) to the west. It also led – and leads – to the heart of the Old Centre, Dam Square, the site of the city's most imperious building, the Koninklijk Paleis (Royal Palace). Nowadays much of the Oude Zijde is taken up by the city's notorious Red Light District, and it's here that many tourists aim for first. But the area is about more than just sleaze: its main canals and the houses that line them are among Amsterdam's most handsome. And the Old Centre as a whole hosts some of the city's best bars and restaurants alongside the tourist tat.**

## Centraal Station

With its high gables and cheerful brickwork, Centraal Station is an imposing prelude to the city, built in the 1880s when it aroused much controversy because it effectively separated the centre from the River IJ, source of the city's wealth, for the first time in Amsterdam's long history. Outside, Stationsplein is a breezy open space, edged by ovals of water, packed with trams and dotted with barrel organs and chip stands, with street performers completing the picture in the summer. At the time of writing it was dominated by building works on the city's new north–south transport link; once they're complete, expect a much spruced-up open space.

## St Nicolaaskerk

Prins Hendrikkade. Mon & Sat noon–3pm, Tues–Fri 11am–4pm. Free.

The city's foremost Catholic

▼ CENTRAAL STATION

THE OLD CENTRE
RESTAURANTS
Bern 26
Van Beeren 29
Bird 14
Blauwe aan de Waal 23
Centra 10
Green Planet 11
Hemelse Modder 22
Hoi Tin 21
Van Kerkwijk 32
Keuken van 1870 2
Kobe House 7
Lana Thai 6
Lucius 41
Mappa 38
De Portugees 9
Sie Joe 15
BARS
Absinthe 33
Argos 13
De Bekeerde Suster 27
Belgique 17
Blincker 39
De Buurvrouw 34
Cuckoo's Nest 5
Diep 30
De Drie Fleschjes 16
De Engelbewaarder 40
Gollem 18
Hoppe 42
De Jaren 47
Lokaal 't Loosje 24
Luxembourg 43
Why Not 4
Wynand Fockink 25
OLD CENTRE
Luthersekerk
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Nieuwe Kerk
De Bijenkorf
Magna Plaza
Koninklijk Paleis
War Memorial
Madame Tussaud's
'ome Jan'
Historisch Museum
Agnietenkapel
Galerie Mokum
Wilhelmina
Begijnhof
Huis op de Drie Grachten
Allard Pierson Museum
Bijbels Museum
Rasphuis
Munttoren
Flower Market
DAM
RAADHUISSTRAAT
BEURSPLEIN
DAMRAK
NIEUWEZIJDS VOORBURGWAL
OUDE TURFMARKT
Rokin
Singel
Herengracht
Brouwersgracht
Keizersgracht
0
200 m

**COFFEESHOPS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Abraxas | 28 |
| Dampkring | 48 |
| Extase | 36 |
| Grasshopper | 8 |
| Rusland | 37 |

**CAFÉS & TEAROOMS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Arnots | 49 |
| Café Beurs van Berlage | 12 |
| Latei | 20 |
| 't Nieuwe Kafe | 19 |
| Puccini | 45 |
| Restaurant 1e Class | 1 |
| Vlaamse Friethuis | 46 |

**CLUBS & VENUES**

| | |
|---|---|
| Bitterzoet | 3 |
| Dansen bij Jansen | 44 |
| Vrankrijk | 31 |
| Waalse Kerk | 35 |

**SHOPS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Akkerman | o |
| Athenaeum | m |
| De Bierkoning | f |
| De Bijenkorf | d |
| Boudisque | a |
| Condomerie Het Gulden Vlies | c |
| Delft Shop | i |
| Geels & Co | b |
| Jacob Hooij | g |
| P.G.C. Hajenius | k |
| Posthumus | j |
| Puccini | p |
| De Slegte | h |
| Vrolijk | e |
| Waterstone's | n |

church, with whopping twin towers and a cavernous interior. Above the altar is the crown of the Habsburg Emperor Maximilian, very much a symbol of the city and one you'll see again and again. Otherwise the interior is nothing special.

### Damrak

Running from Centraal Station to Dam Square, Damrak was a canal and the city's main nautical artery until 1672, when it was filled in, much to the relief of the locals, who were tired of the stink. Thereafter, with the docks moved elsewhere, Damrak became a busy commercial drag, as it remains today: a wide but rather unenticing avenue lined with tacky restaurants, bars and bureaux de change.

▲ DAMRAK

### The Beurs van Berlage

Damrak 277 Ⓦwww.beursvanberlage.nl. The imposing bulk of the Beurs – the old Stock Exchange – is a seminal work designed at the turn of the twentieth century by the leading light of the Dutch modern movement, Hendrik Petrus Berlage. Berlage re-routed Dutch architecture with this building, forsaking the classicism that had dominated the nineteenth century for a modern style with cleaner lines. The Beurs has long since lost its commercial function and today it's used for exhibitions, concerts and conferences, which means that sometimes you can go in, sometimes you can't. Inside, the main hall is distinguished by the graceful lines of its exposed ironwork and its shallow-arched arcades as well as the fanciful frieze celebrating the stockbroker's trade. If it's closed, stop by the café that fronts onto Beurssplein around the corner (see p.61) for a coffee and admire the tiled scenes of the past, present and the future by Jan Toorop.

### Dam Square

It was Dam Square that gave Amsterdam its name: in the thirteenth century the River Amstel was dammed here, and the fishing village that grew around it became known as "Amstelredam". Boats could sail into the square down the Damrak and unload right in the middle of the settlement, which soon prospered by trading herrings for Baltic grain. Today it's an open and airy but somehow rather desultory square, despite – or perhaps partly because of – the presence of the main municipal war memorial, a prominent stone tusk adorned by bleak, suffering figures and decorated with the coats of arms of each of the Netherlands' provinces (plus the ex-colony of Indonesia). The Amsterdam branch of **Madame Tussaud's** waxworks is on the Dam, at no. 20 (daily 10am–6.30pm, except July & Aug daily 10am–9pm; last entry 1hr before closing; €19.95, children 5–15 €14.95; Ⓦwww.madametussauds.nl).

### The Koninklijk Paleis

Dam ⓣ020/620 4060, ⓦwww.koninklijkhuis.nl. July & Aug 11am–5pm, and occasionally at other times during the year. €4.50. Dominating Dam Square is the Koninklijk Paleis or Royal Palace, though the title is deceptive, given that this vast sandstone structure started out as the city's Stadhuis (town hall), and only had its first royal occupant when Louis Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, moved in during the French occupation. At the time of the building's construction in the mid-seventeenth century, Amsterdam was at the height of its powers and the city council craved a residence that was a suitable declaration of its wealth and independence. They opted for a progressive design by Jacob van Campen, and in 1648 work started on what was then the largest town hall in Europe, supported by no less than 13,659 wooden piles driven into the Dam's sandy soil.

It is closed to the public for much of the year, when you have to make do with the exterior – very much to the allegorical point with depictions of Amsterdam as a port and trading centre, that at the front is presided over by Neptune and a veritable herd of unicorns. Above these panels are representations of the values the city council espoused – at the front, Prudence, Justice and Peace, to the rear Temperance and Vigilance to either side of a muscular, globe-carrying Atlas. One deliberate precaution, however, was the omission of a central doorway – just in case the mob turned nasty and stormed the place.

Inside, the **Citizens' Hall** is the most remarkable room, a handsome arcaded marble chamber where the enthroned figure of Amsterdam looks down on three circular maps, one each of the eastern and western hemispheres, the other of the northern sky. Other allegorical figures ram home the municipal point: flanking "Amsterdam" are Strength and Wisdom and on the left the god Amphion plays his lyre to persuade the stones to pile themselves up into a wall as an example of good government.

There are witty touches too – cocks fight above the entrance to the Commissioner of Petty Affairs, while Apollo, god of the sun and the arts, brings harmony to the disputes; a relief in the Bankruptcy Chamber shows the Fall of Icarus, surrounded by marble carvings depicting hungry rats scurrying around an empty chest and unpaid bills.

### The Nieuwe Kerk

Dam ⓣ020/638 6909, ⓦwww.nieuwekerk.nl. Vying for importance with the Royal Palace is the adjacent Nieuwe Kerk, which despite its name – "new church" – is an early fifteenth-century structure built in a late flourish of the Gothic style, with a forest of pinnacles and high, slender gables. Nowadays de-sanctified and used for temporary exhibitions, opening times vary according to what's on, and occasionally it's closed altogether. But it is worth going in if you can: its hangar-like interior holds a scattering of decorative highlights, such as the seventeenth-century tomb of Dutch naval hero Admiral Michiel de Ruyter, complete with trumpeting angels, conch-blowing Neptunes and cherubs all in a tizzy. Ruyter was buried here with full military honours and the church is still used for state occasions: the coronations

of queens Wilhelmina, Juliana and, in 1980, Beatrix, were all held here.

### Magna Plaza

Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal ⓦ www.magnaplaza.nl. Mon 11am–7pm, Tues–Sat 10am–7pm, Thurs until 9pm, Sun noon–7pm. Behind the Royal Palace, you can't miss the old neo-Gothic post office of 1899, now converted into the Magna Plaza shopping mall. The building is a grand affair, and makes an attractive setting for the numerous clothes chains that now inhabit its redbrick interior.

### The Red Light District

The area immediately to the east of Damrak is the Red Light District, known locally as "De Walletjes" (Small Walls) on account of the series of low brick walls that contains its canals. The district stretches across the two narrow canals that once marked the eastern part of medieval Amsterdam, Oudezijds Voorburgwal and Oudezijds Achterburgwal, with the far canal of Kloveniersburgwal forming its eastern boundary. The area is pretty seedy, although the legalized prostitution here has long been one of the city's most distinctive draws. It wasn't always so: the handsome facades of Oudezijds Voorburgwal in particular recall ritzier days, when this was one of the wealthiest parts of the city, richly earning its nickname the "Velvet Canal".

Oudezijds Voorburgwal and Oudezijds Achterburgwal, with their narrow connecting passages, are thronged with "window brothels", and at busy times the crass, on-street haggling over the price of sex is drowned out by a surprisingly festive atmosphere – entire families grinning more or less amiably at the women in the windows or discussing the specifications of the sex toys in the shops. There's a nasty undertow to the district, however, oddly enough sharper during the daytime, when the pimps hang out in shifty gangs and drug addicts wait anxiously, assessing the chances of scoring their next hit. Don't even think about taking a picture of one of the windows, unless you're prepared for some major grief from the camera-shy prostitutes and their minders.

▲ RED LIGHT DISTRICT

### Oude Kerk

Oudekerksplein. Mon–Sat 11am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm. €4. The Gothic Oude Kerk is the city's most appealing church. There's been a church on this site since the middle of the thirteenth century, but most of the present building dates from a century later, funded by the pilgrims who came here in their hundreds following a widely publicized miracle. The story goes that in 1345 a dying man regurgitated the Host he had received here at Communion and when it was thrown on the fire afterwards, it did not burn. The unburnable Host was placed in a chest and eventually installed here,

and although it disappeared during the Reformation, thousands of the faithful still come to take part in the annual commemorative Stille Omgang in mid-March, a silent nocturnal procession terminating at the Oude Kerk. Inside you can see the unadorned memorial tablet of Rembrandt's first wife, Saskia van Uylenburg, beneath the smaller of the organs, and three beautifully coloured stained-glass windows beside the ambulatory dating from the 1550s. They depict, from left to right, the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Dormition of the Virgin. Outside, the Oude Kerk tower is open weekends between April and September (1–5pm; €5) and offers predictably great views – in a city with relatively few such opportunities.

### The Amstelkring

Oudezijds Voorburgwal 40. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm. €7. A few metres north of the Oude Kerk is the clandestine Amstelkring, a former Catholic church, now one of Amsterdam's most enjoyable museums. The Amstelkring – "Amstel Circle" – is named after the group of nineteenth-century historians who saved the building from demolition, but its proper name is Ons Lieve Heer Op Solder ("Our Dear Lord in the Attic"). The church dates from the early seventeenth century when, with the Protestants firmly in control, the city's Catholics were only allowed to practise their faith in private – as here in this clandestine church, which occupies the loft of a wealthy merchant's house. The church's narrow nave has been skilfully shoehorned into the available space and, flanked by elegant balconies, there's just enough room for an ornately carved organ at one end and a mock-marble high altar, decorated with Jacob de Wit's mawkish *Baptism of Christ*, at the other. The rest of the house is similarly untouched, its original furnishings reminiscent of interiors by Vermeer or De Hooch.

▲ AMSTELKRING INTERIOR

### Hash Marihuana Hemp Museum

Oudezijds Achterburgwal 148 ⓣ020/623 5961, ⓦwww.hashmuseum.com. Daily 11am–10pm. €5.70. The Hash Marihuana Hemp Museum is still going strong, despite intermittent battles with the police. It features displays on different kinds of dope and the huge number of ways to imbibe and otherwise use it. There's also an indoor marijuana garden, samples of textiles and paper made with hemp, and pamphlets explaining the medicinal properties of cannabis. There's also a shop

selling pipes, books, videos and plenty of souvenirs.

▲ HASH MARIHUANA HEMP MUSEUM

## Nieuwmarkt

On the far side of the Red Light District, the Nieuwmarkt, a wide open cobbled square that was long one of the city's most important markets, has as its main focus the multi-turreted **Waag**, a delightful building dating from the 1480s, when it served as one of the city's fortified gates, Sint Antoniespoort, before being turned into a municipal weighing-house (*waag*), with the rooms upstairs taken over by the surgeons' guild. It was here that the surgeons held lectures on anatomy and public dissections, the inspiration for Rembrandt's famous *Anatomy Lesson of Dr Tulp*. It has now been converted into a café-bar and restaurant, *In de Waag*.

## The Schreierstoren

Geldersekade. A few minutes' walk north from Nieuwmarkt, the squat Schreierstoren (Weepers' Tower) is a rare surviving chunk of the city's medieval wall. Originally, the tower overlooked the River IJ and it was here (legend has it) that women gathered to watch their menfolk sail away – hence its name. An old and badly weathered stone plaque inserted in the wall is a reminder of all those sad goodbyes, and another much more recent plaque recalls the departure of Henry Hudson from here in 1609, when he stumbled across an island the locals called Manhattan.

## Het Scheepvaarthuis

Prins Hendrikkade 108. At the end of the next canal along, Oude Waal, this almost neurotic edifice, completed in 1917, is covered with a welter of decoration celebrating the city's marine connections – the entrance is shaped like the prow of a ship, and surmounted by statues of Poseidon and his wife and representations of the four points

▼ THE WAAG

of the compass. It's been empty for a while, but renovations are underway to turn it into a luxury hotel.

### Kloveniersburgwal

Nieuwmarkt lies at the northern end of Kloveniersburgwal, a long, dead-straight waterway framed by a string of old and dignified facades that was the outermost of the three eastern canals of the medieval city. One house of special note here is the **Trippenhuis**, at no. 29, a huge overblown mansion complete with Corinthian pilasters and a grand frieze built for the Trip family in 1662. One of the richest families in Amsterdam, the Trips were long a powerful force among the Magnificat, the clique of families (Six, Trip, Hooft and Pauw) who shared power during the city's Golden Age. Almost directly opposite, on the west bank of the canal, the **Kleine Trippenhuis**, at no. 26, is, by contrast, one of the narrowest houses in Amsterdam, albeit with a warmly carved facade with a balustrade featuring centaurs and sphinxes. Legend asserts that Mr Trip's coachman was so taken aback by the size of the new family mansion that he exclaimed he would be happy with a home no wider than the Trips' front door – which is exactly what he got; his reaction to his new lodgings is not recorded.

### St Antoniesbreestraat

Stretching south from the wide open spaces of the Nieuwmarkt, St Antoniesbreestraat once linked the city centre with the Jewish quarter, but its huddle of shops and houses was mostly demolished in the 1980s to make way for a main road. The plan was subsequently abandoned,

▲ KLEINE TRIPPENHUIS

but the modern buildings that now line most of the street hardly fire the soul, even if the modern symmetries – and cubist, coloured panels – of the apartment blocks that spill along part of the street are visually arresting.

### The Pintohuis

St Antoniesbreestraat 69. Mon & Wed 2–8pm, Fri 2–5pm, Sat 11am–4pm. Free. One of the few survivors of all this development is the Pintohuis, which is now a public library. Easily spotted by its off-white Italianate facade, the mansion is named after Isaac de Pinto, a Jew who fled Portugal to escape the Inquisition and subsequently became a founder of the East India Company. Pinto bought the property in 1651 and promptly had it remodelled in grand style, the facade interrupted by six lofty pilasters, which lead the eye up to the blind balustrade. The mansion

was the talk of the town, even more so when Pinto had the interior painted in a similar style to the front – pop in to look at the birds and cherubs of the original painted ceiling.

### The Zuiderkerk

Mon–Fri 9am–4pm, Sat noon–4pm. Free. The Zuiderkerk dates from 1611 and was designed by the prolific architect and sculptor Hendrick de Keyser, whose distinctive – and very popular – style extrapolated elements of traditional Flemish design, with fanciful detail and frilly towers added wherever possible. The soaring tower is typical of his work and comes complete with balconies and balustrades, arches and columns. Now deconsecrated, the church has been turned into a municipal information centre with displays on housing and the environment, plus temporary exhibitions revealing the city council's future plans. The tower, which has a separate entrance, can be climbed during the summer (June–Sept Wed–Sat 2–4pm; €3).

▼ THE ZUIDERKERK

### Oudemanhuispoort and around

Doubling back to Kloveniersburgwal, turn right for the Oudemanhuispoort, a covered passageway leading off the street that is lined with secondhand bookstalls (Mon–Sat 10am–4pm); it was formerly part of an almshouse complex for elderly men – hence the unusual name. The buildings on either side are part of the University of Amsterdam, which dominates this part of town, and you can either wander through its peaceful precincts, or, just beyond, cross the south end of Kloveniersburgwal, to one of the prettiest corners of the city – a small pocket of placid waterways and old canal houses that extends east to Groenburgwal, a delightful, dead-end canal.

### Rokin and Kalverstraat

**Rokin** picks up where the Damrak leaves off, cutting south from Dam Square in a wide sweep that follows the former course of the River Amstel. This was the business centre of the nineteenth-century city, and although it has lost much of its prestige it is still flanked by an attractive medley of architectural styles incorporating everything from grandiose nineteenth-century mansions to more utilitarian modern stuff. Running parallel, pedestrianized **Kalverstraat** is a busy shopping street that has been a commercial centre since medieval times, when it was used as a calf market; nowadays it's home to many of the city's chain stores and clothes shops – you could be anywhere in Holland really.

▲ ALLARD PIERSON MUSEUM

### Allard Pierson Museum

Oude Turfmarkt 127. Tues–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat & Sun 1–5pm. €5. A good old-fashioned archeological museum in a solid Neoclassical building dating from the 1860s, the Allard Pierson Museum holds a wide-ranging but fairly small collection of finds retrieved from Egypt, Greece and Italy. The particular highlights are the museum's Greek pottery, with fine examples of both the black- and red-figured wares produced in the sixth and fifth centuries BC, and several ornate Roman sarcophagi.

### Heiligeweg and Spui

Crossing Kalverstraat, workaday **Heiligeweg**, or "Holy Way", was once part of a much longer route used by pilgrims heading into Amsterdam. Every other religious reference disappeared centuries ago, but there is one interesting edifice here, the fanciful gateway of the old **Rasphuis** (House of Correction) that now fronts a shopping mall at the foot of Voetboogstraat. The gateway is surmounted by a sculpture of a woman punishing two criminals chained at her sides above the single word "Castigatio" (punishment). Beneath is a carving by Hendrik de Keyser showing wolves and lions cringing before the whip.

Cut up Voetboogstraat and you soon reach the **Spui**, whose west end opens out into a wide, tram-clanking intersection flanked by bookshops and cafés. In the middle is a cloying statue of a young boy, known as *'t Lieverdje* ("Little Darling" or "Loveable Scamp"), a gift to the city from a cigarette company in 1960. It was here in the mid-1960s, with the statue seen as a symbol of the addicted consumer, that the playful political mavericks, the Provos, organized some of their most successful public *ludiek* (pranks). There's a small secondhand book market here on Friday mornings.

### The Begijnhof

Daily 10am–5pm. Free. A little gateway on the north side of the Spui leads into the Begijnhof, where a huddle of immaculately maintained old houses looks onto a central green; if this door is locked, try the main entrance, just a couple of hundred metres north of the Spui on Gedempte Begijnensloot. The Begijnhof was founded in the fourteenth century as a home for the *beguines* – members of a Catholic sisterhood living as nuns, but without vows and with the right of return to the secular world. The original medieval complex comprised a series of humble brick cottages, but these were mostly replaced by the larger,

grander houses of today shortly after the Reformation, though the secretive, enclosed design survived.

The **Engelse Kerk** which takes up one side of the Begijnhof is of medieval construction, but it was taken from the *beguines* and given to Amsterdam's English community during the Reformation and is of interest for its carefully worked pulpit panels, several of which were designed by a youthful Piet Mondriaan. The *beguines*, meanwhile, celebrated Mass inconspicuously in the clandestine Catholic chapel (Mon 1–6.30pm, Tues–Sun 9am–6.30pm; free), which they established in the house opposite their old church, and this is still used today, a homely little place with some sentimental religious paintings.

▲ THE BEGIJNHOF

## Amsterdams Historisch Museum

Two entrances: Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 357 & Kalverstraat 92 ☎020/523 1822, ⓦwww.ahm.nl. Mon–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat & Sun 11am–5pm. €6. A few metres from the Begijnhof, the open-access and free **Schuttersgalerij** – the Civic Guard Gallery – also accessible from Kalverstraat

▲ AMSTERDAMS HISTORISCH MUSEUM

and St Luciensteeg, is lined by an interesting assortment of group portraits of the Amsterdam militia, painted when the city was at the height of its economic success. The gallery is actually part of the adjoining **Amsterdams Historisch Museum**, which occupies the smartly restored seventeenth-century buildings of the municipal orphanage. This museum surveys the city's development with a scattering of artefacts and lots of paintings from the thirteenth century onwards – a somewhat garbled collection, but at least the labelling is mostly in English as well as Dutch. High points include a number of paintings from the city's Golden Age – Rembrandt's wonderful *Anatomy Lesson of Dr Jan Deijman* stands out – and the room entitled "Social Care & Stern Discipline". Here, the harsh paternalism of the city's merchant oligarchy is examined with paintings depicting the self-satisfied regents of several orphanages in the company of the grateful poor.

# Shops

### Akkerman

Kalverstraat 149 ⓣ020/623 1649. Mon–Fri 10am–5.45pm, Thurs until 9pm, Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm. The city's poshest pen shop, with an excellent selection of pens and writing accessories.

### Athenaeum

Spui 14 ⓣ020/514 1460. Mon 11am–6pm, Tues–Sat 9.30am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm, Sun noon–5.30pm. Perhaps the city's most appealing bookshop, and although it's relatively short on stuff in English, its array of books about Amsterdam is always current, and its selection of international newspapers and magazines is one of the best in the city.

### De Bierkoning

Paleisstraat 125 ⓣ020/625 2336. Mon 1–7pm, Tues–Fri 11am–7pm, Sat 11am–6pm, Sun 1–6pm. The "Beer King" is aptly named: 950 different beers, with the appropriate glasses to drink them from – just in case you thought beer-drinking could be taken lightly.

### De Bijenkorf

Dam 1 ⓣ020/552 1700. Mon 11am–7pm, Tues & Wed 9.30am–7pm, Thurs & Fri 9.30am–9pm, Sat 9.30am–6pm, Sun noon–6pm. Dominating the northern corner of Dam Square, this is the city's top department store, a huge bustling place whose name means beehive. Curiously, De Bijenkorf posed all sorts of problems for the Germans when they first occupied the city in World War II. It was a Jewish concern, so the Nazis didn't really want their troops shopping here, but it was just too popular to implement a total ban; the bizarre solution was to prohibit German soldiers from shopping on the ground floor, where the store's Jewish employees were concentrated, as they always had been, in the luxury goods section. Nowadays it's good for clothes, accessories and kids' stuff.

### Boudisque

Haringpakkersteeg 10–18 ⓣ020/623 2603. Tues–Sat 10am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm, Sun & Mon noon–6pm. One of the city's best record stores, with a good selection of metal, reggae, world music and dance.

### Condomerie Het Gulden Vlies

Warmoesstraat 141 ⓣ020/627 4174. Mon–Sat 11am–6pm. Perhaps the world's most famous condom shop, selling condoms of every shape, size and flavour imaginable.

### Delft Shop

Gallery de Munt ⓣ020/623 2271, ⓦwww.delftshop.com. Mon–Sat 9.30–6pm, Sun 11am–6pm. If you're after that elusive present and don't want to settle for tourist tat, this is the place. A great selection of Delftware, from small ashtrays and trinkets for €2 to more elaborate designs such as the €7500 replica of a tulip vase held in the Rijksmuseum.

### Geels & Co

Warmoesstraat 67 ⓣ020/624 0683. Mon–Sat 9.30am–6pm. Oddly situated among Warmeosstraat's loud bars and porn shops, this is one of the city's oldest and best-equipped coffee and tea specialists, and has a small museum of coffee upstairs.

### Jacob Hooij

Kloveniersburgwal 10 ⓣ020/624 3041. Mon 1–6pm, Tues–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat 10am–5pm. In business at this address since 1778, this is a traditional homeopathic chemist

with any amount of herbs and natural cosmetics, as well as a huge stock of *drop* (Dutch liquorice).

### P.G.C. Hajenius

Rokin 92 ⓣ020/623 7494. Mon noon–6pm, Tues–Sat 9.30am–6pm, Sun noon–5pm. Old, established tobacconist selling its own and other brands of cigars, tobacco, smoking accessories, and every make of cigarette you can think of.

### Posthumus

Sint Luciensteeg 23 ⓣ020/625 5812. Mon noon–5pm, Tues–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat 11am–5pm. Posh stationery, cards and, best of all, a choice of hundreds of rubber stamps.

### Puccini

Staalstraat 17 ⓣ020/626 5474, ⓦwww.puccinibomboni.com. Mon noon–6pm, Tues–Sat 9am–6pm, Sun noon–5pm. Perhaps the best chocolate shop in town – all handmade, with an array of fantastic and imaginative fillings.

▲ PUCCINI

### De Slegte

Kalverstraat 48 ⓣ020/622 5933. Mon 11am–6pm, Tues–Sat 9.30am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm, Sun noon–5pm. The Amsterdam branch of a nationwide chain specializing in new and used books at a discount.

### Vrolijk

Paleisstraat 135 ⓣ020/623 5142, ⓦwww.vrolijk.nu. Mon 11am–6pm, Tues–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm. The self-proclaimed largest gay and lesbian bookshop in Europe, with books, magazines, videos and more.

### Waterstone's

Kalverstraat 152 ⓣ020/638 3821. Mon & Sun 11am–6pm, Tues & Wed 9am–6pm, Thurs 9am–9pm, Fri 9am–7pm, Sat 10am–7pm. Amsterdam branch of the UK high-street chain, with four floors of English books and magazines.

## Coffeeshops

### Abraxas

Jonge Roelensteeg 12. Daily 10am–1am. Quirky, mezzanine coffeeshop with spiral staircases that are challenging after a spliff. The hot chocolate with hash is not for the susceptible.

### Dampkring

Handboogstraat 29. Mon–Thurs & Sun 10am–1am, Fri & Sat 10am–2am. Colourful coffeeshop with a laidback atmosphere that is known for its good-quality hash.

### Extase

Oude Hoogstraat 2. Daily 9am–1am. Part of a chain run by the initiator of the Hash Museum (see p.53). Considerably less chi-chi than a lot of coffeeshops but a handy Red Light District standby.

### Grasshopper

Oudebrugsteeg 16. Sun–Thurs 8am–1am, Fri & Sat 7am–3am. Multi-levelled coffeeshop, with bar, sports screen and restaurant. One of the city's more welcoming places, although its proximity to Centraal Station

means that at times it can be overwhelmed by tourists. Another location at Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 57.

### Kadinsky

Rosmarijnsteeg 9. Mon–Thurs & Sun 10am–1am, Fri & Sat 10am–2am. Great deals weighed out to a jazz backdrop; great cookies too.

### Rusland

Rusland 16. Daily 10am–1am. One of the first Amsterdam coffeeshops, a cramped but vibrant place that's a favourite with both dope fans and tea addicts (it has 43 different kinds). A cut above the rest.

## Cafés and tearooms

### Arnots

Singel 441. Mon–Fri 11.30am–4.30pm. Closed Sat & Sun. A basement café serving some of the best coffee in town along with wholemeal sandwiches and freshly squeezed apple juice. A great summertime spot with people spilling out onto the pavement.

### Café Beurs van Berlage

Beurssplein 1. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. The best chance to glimpse the interior of the Beurs, and an elegantly furnished place to drink coffee or eat lunch. Tables outside too.

### Latei

Zeedijk 174. Mon–Wed 8am–6pm, Thurs & Fri 8am–10pm, Sat 9am–10pm, Sun 11am–6pm. Homely shop and café that sells bric-a-brac as well as serving good coffee and decent lunches. Quite a find if you fancy something different from the Chinese restaurants that dominate this end of Zeedijk.

### 't Nieuwe Kafe

Eggerstraat 8. Daily 9am–6pm. Beside the Nieuwe Kerk, this bistro-style café is popular with shoppers and tourists, serving good, reasonably priced breakfasts, lunches, light meals and great pancakes too.

### Puccini

Staalstraat 21. Lovely café that serves great salads, sandwiches and cakes and pastries, a few doors down from its sister chocolate shop (see opposite).

### Restaurant 1e Class

Platform 2b, Centraal Station. Daily 8.30am–11pm. More of a fully-fledged restaurant than a café, and with a huge menu to prove it. But its location in Centraal Station means that you're more likely to choose to enjoy its sumptuous turn-of-the-century interior and solid menu of omelettes, sandwiches or more substantial meat and fish offerings at lunchtime. And it's certainly the best option in the station's immediate vicinity.

### Vlaams Frites Huis

Voetboogstraat 33. This hole-in-the-wall takeaway has a long-established and pretty much

▼ VLAAMS FRITES HUIS

undisputed reputation for serving the best frites in town.

# Restaurants

### Van Beeren

Koningstraat 54 ⓣ020/622 2329. Daily 5.30–10.15pm. This eetcafé serves a satisfying mixture of Dutch staples and modern European fare in relaxed surroundings.

### Bird

Zeedijk 77 ⓣ020/420 6289. Daily noon–10pm. This Thai canteen is always packed, and rightly so, drawing people from far and wide for its cheap and authentic Thai fare. Its big brother across the road serves much the same food in slightly more upscale surroundings, if that's what you're after.

### Blauwe aan de Waal

Oudezijds Achterburgwal 99 ⓣ020/330 2257. Mon–Sat 6–11pm. Quite a haven, situated down an alley in the heart of the Red Light District, with tremendous French-Dutch food and a wonderfully soothing environment after the mayhem of the streets outside. Not cheap, but worth every cent.

### Café Bern

Nieuwmarkt 9 ⓣ020/622 0034. Daily 6–11pm. Casual and inexpensive brown café patronized by a predominantly arty clientele. Run by a native of Switzerland, its speciality is, not surprisingly, excellent and alcoholic cheese fondue.

### Centra

Lange Niezel 29 ⓣ020/622 3050. Daily 1–11pm. This authentic Spanish cantina is a long-standing Red Light District favourite, with a wonderful selection of Spanish food, masterfully cooked and genially served.

### Green Planet

Spuistraat 122 ⓣ020/625 8280. Daily 5.30pm–midnight. Cute mezzanine café with lots of tofu dishes and a varied international menu. Cash only.

### Hemelse Modder

Oude Waal 9 ⓣ020/624 3203. Daily except Mon 6–11pm. Tasty meat, fish and vegetarian food in French-Italian style at reasonable prices in an informal atmosphere. Highly popular.

### Hoi Tin

Zeedijk 122 ⓣ020/625 6451. Daily noon–midnight. You can always trust a restaurant where you have to walk through the kitchen to get to your table, and this one is no exception: a constantly busy Chinatown favourite with an enormous menu (in English too). Dim sum at lunchtime.

### Van Kerkwijk

Nes 41 ⓣ020/620 3316. Daily noon–10pm. It looks like a bar but is more of a restaurant these days, serving steaks, fish and so on from an ever-changing menu that isn't written down but is heroically memorized

▲ CAFE BERN

▲ HOI TIN

by the attentive waiting staff. Good food, and cheap too – mains from €10.

### Keuken van 1870

Spuistraat 2 ⓣ020/620 4018. Mon–Sat 4–10.30pm. This big light room has been serving hearty Dutch food to cheapskates for years and continues – justifiably – to thrive. Its three-course €7.50 menu is one of the city's best bargains.

### Kobe House

Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 77 ⓣ020/622 6458. Daily 5pm–midnight. Not a lot of atmosphere, partly because it's a big restaurant that rarely seems to get full. But if you're craving sushi or other Japanese treats, this is the place.

### Lana Thai

Warmoesstraat 10 ⓣ020/624 2179. Mon & Wed–Sun 5–11pm. Among the best Thai restaurants in town, with seating overlooking the water of Damrak. Quality food and chic surroundings but high prices.

### Lucius

Spuistraat 247 ⓣ020/624 1831. Daily 5pm–midnight. This long-established restaurant has been uneven over the years but when it gets it right – as it usually does – it's one of the best fish restaurants in town.

### Mappa

Nes 59 ⓣ020/528 9170. Daily noon–10.30pm. Classic Italian food with some inventive twists, incorporating good homemade pasta dishes and excellent service in an unpretentious and modern environment.

### De Portugees

Zeedijk 39 ⓣ020/427 2005. Daily 6–10.30pm. Truly a little piece of Portugal on the Zeedijk, with chaotic service and authentically hearty and filling (rather than gourmet) food – tasty fish stews, garlicky sausages, salt cod and eggs.

### Sie Joe

Gravenstraat 24 ⓣ020/624 1830. Mon–Sat 11am–7pm, Thurs until 8pm. Small Indonesian café-restaurant whose great value-for-money menu is far from extensive but comprises well-prepared, simple dishes such as *gado gado*, *sateh* and *rendang*.

## Bars

### Absinthe

Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 171 ⓣ020/777 4870. Small, late-night basement lounge bar that specializes in – you guessed it – absinthe, or at least the turn-of-the-century decadence that's associated with it. DJs at the weekend.

### Argos

Warmoesstraat 95 ⓦwww.argosbar.com. Daily 10pm–3am. Europe's

oldest gay leather bar, with two bars and a raunchy cellar. Not for the weak-kneed.

### De Bekeerde Suster

Kloveniersburgwal 6. Don't waste your time in the unappealing drinkeries of the Red Light District proper; this place is a few steps away and offers home-brewed beer, a good bar menu and a very convivial atmosphere, just off the top end of Nieuwmarkt.

### Belgique

Gravenstraat 2. Tiny bar behind the Nieuwe Kerk that serves up Belgian brews with cubes of cheese.

### Blincker

St Barberentraat 7. Hi-tech theatre bar just south of the Red Light District that also serves decent food.

### De Buurvrouw

St Pieterspoortsteeg 29 ⓣ020/625 9654. Dark, noisy late-night bar with pool, DJs and irregular live music.

### Cuckoo's Nest

Nieuwezijds Kolk 6 ⓦwww.cuckoosnest.nl. Daily 1pm–1am. A cruisey gay leather bar with a long reputation, this is described as "the best place in town for chance encounters". Vast and infamous darkroom.

### Diep

Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 256. Not much more than an ordinary brown café during the day, but a hip hangout with DJs at night.

### De Drie Fleschjes

Gravenstraat 18. Mon–Sat noon–8.30pm, Sun 3–8pm. Tasting house for spirits and liqueurs, which once would have been made on the premises. Clients tend to be well heeled or well soused (often both).

### De Engelbewaarder

Kloveniersburgwal 59. Once the meeting place of Amsterdam's bookish types, this is still known as a literary café. It's relaxed and informal, with live jazz on Sunday afternoons.

### Gollem

Raamsteeg 4. Small and intimate bar with a superb selection of Belgian beers – and with the correct glasses to drink them from. The genial barman will help you choose.

▲ GOLLEM

### Hoppe

Spui 18. One of Amsterdam's longest-established and best-known bars, frequented by the city's businessfolk on their way home. Summer is especially good, when the throngs spill out onto the street.

### De Jaren

Nieuwe Doelenstraat 20. One of the grandest of the grand cafés,

overlooking the Amstel next to the university, with three floors, two terraces and a cool, light feel. A great place to nurse the Sunday papers – unusually you'll find English ones here. It serves reasonably priced food too, and there's a great salad bar.

### Lokaal 't Loosje

Nieuwmarkt 32. Quiet old-style brown café that's been here for two hundred years and looks it. Wonderful for late breakfasts and pensive afternoons.

### Luxembourg

Spui 22. Crowded, trendy grand café with a long and deep bar, a good selection of snacks, and possibly the best hamburgers in town.

### Why Not

Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 28 Ⓦ www.whynot.nl. Daily noon–1am; live shows Thurs–Sat. Long-standing, intimate gay bar and club with a porno cinema above; happy hour 7–9pm.

### Wynand Fockink

Pijlsteeg 31. Small and cosy bar hidden just behind the Krasnapolsky hotel off Dam Square. One of the older *proeflokalen*, it offers a vast range of its own flavoured *jenevers* that used to be distilled down the street.

## Clubs and venues

### Bitterzoet

Spuistraat 2 Ⓣ 020/521 3001, Ⓦ www.bitterzoet.com. Daily 8pm–3am, 4am at weekends. Bar-cum-club with DJs every night and sometimes live music too – reggae, hip-hop, dance. No entrance fee if you arrive before 11pm.

### Dansen bij Jansen

Handboogstraat 11–13 Ⓣ 020/620 1779, Ⓦ www.dansenbijjansen.nl. Daily 10pm–4am, Sat & Sun until 5am. €2 Mon–Wed & Sun, €4 Thurs–Sat. Club with upstairs bar that was founded by – and for – students. It's very popular, playing a mixture of pop, chart and R&B. though officially you need student ID to get in.

### Vrankrijk

Spuistraat 216 Ⓦ www.squat.net/vrankrijk. Regular club nights at this squat club and café – as you might expect the emphasis is on punk, speed garage, and the like.

### Waalse Kerk

Oudezijds Achterburgwal 159 Ⓣ 020/623 2074. Tickets €10–15. Weekend afternoon and evening concerts of early and chamber music.

# The Grachtengordel

**Medieval Amsterdam was enclosed by the Singel, part of the city's protective moat, but this is now just the first of five canals that reach right around the city centre, extending anticlockwise from Brouwersgracht to the River Amstel in a "girdle of canals" or Grachtengordel. This is without doubt the most charming part of the city, its lattice of olive-green waterways and dinky humpback bridges overlooked by street upon street of handsome seventeenth-century canal houses, almost invariably undisturbed by later development. It's a subtle cityscape – full of surprises, with a bizarre carving here, an unusual facade there – but architectural peccadilloes aside, it is the district's overall atmosphere that appeals rather than any specific sight, with the notable exception of the Anne Frank Huis. There's no obvious walking route around the Grachtengordel, and indeed you may prefer to wander around as the mood takes you, but the description we've given below goes from north to south, taking in all the highlights on the way. On all three of the main canals – Herengracht, Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht – street numbers begin in the north and increase as you go south.**

▲ BROUWERSGRACHT WAREHOUSES

## Brouwersgracht

Running east to west along the northern edge of the three main canals is leafy Brouwersgracht, one of the most picturesque waterways in the city. In the seventeenth century, Brouwersgracht lay at the edge of Amsterdam's great harbour. This was where many of the ships returning from the East unloaded their silks and spices, and as one of the major arteries linking the open sea with the city centre, it was lined with storage depots and warehouses. Breweries flourished here too, capitalizing on their ready access to shipments of fresh water. Today, the harbour bustle has moved elsewhere, and the warehouses, with their distinctive spout-neck gables and shuttered windows, formerly used for the delivery and dispatch of goods by pulley from the canal below, have been converted into apartments,

## The canals

The **canals of the Grachtengordel** were dug in the seventeenth century as part of a comprehensive plan to extend the boundaries of a city no longer able to accommodate its burgeoning population. Increasing the area of the city from two to seven square kilometres was a monumental task, and the conditions imposed by the council were strict. The three main waterways – Herengracht, Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht – were set aside for the residences and businesses of the richer and more influential Amsterdam merchants, while the radial cross-streets were reserved for more modest artisans' homes; meanwhile, immigrants, newly arrived to cash in on Amsterdam's booming economy, were assigned, albeit informally, the Jodenhoek (see p.94) and the Jordaan (see p.85). In the Grachtengordel, everyone, even the wealthiest merchant, had to comply with a set of strict and detailed planning regulations. In particular, the council prescribed the size of each building plot – the frontage was set at thirty feet, the depth two hundred – and although there was a degree of tinkering, the end result was the loose conformity you can see today: tall, narrow residences, whose individualism is mainly restricted to the stylistic permutations amongst the gables.

The earliest extant **gables**, dating from the early seventeenth century, are crow-stepped gables, but these were largely superseded from the 1650s onwards by neck gables and bell gables. Some are embellished, others aren't, many have decorative cornices, some don't, and the fanciest, which almost invariably date from the eighteenth century, sport full-scale balustrades. The plainest gables are those of former **warehouses**, where the deep-arched and shuttered windows line up on either side of loft doors, which were once used for loading and unloading goods, winched by pulley from the street down below. Indeed, outside **pulleys** remain a common feature of houses and warehouses alike, and are often still in use as the easiest way of moving furniture into the city's myriad apartments.

some of the most expensive in Amsterdam. There are handsome merchants' houses here as well, plus moored houseboats and a string of quaint little swing bridges.

▼ HERENGRACHT HOUSE

### Hofje Van Brienen

Prinsengracht 85–133. Mon-Fri 6am–6pm & Sat 6am–2pm. Free. On the east side of Prinsengracht, opposite the large and conspicuous Noorderkerk (see p.87), this brown-brick courtyard was built as an almshouse in 1804 to the order of a certain Aernout van Brienen. A well-to-do merchant, Brienen had locked himself in his own strong room by accident and, in a panic, he vowed to build a *hofje* if he was rescued. The plaque inside the complex doesn't, however, give much of the game away, inscribed demurely with "for the relief and shelter of those in need."

GRACHTENGORDEL
JORDAAN
WESTERSTRAAT
GRACHTENGORDEL
Noordermarkt/ Boerenmarkt
Noorderkerk
Hofje Van Brienen
Pianola Museum
Margriet Nannings
Multatuli Museum
Santa Jet
De Dolphijn
Anne Frank Huis
Arkel Building
Torensluis
Theatermuseum
Westerkerk
Huis Bartolotti
Magna Plaza
Stedelijk Museum Bureau
Vrankrijk
Woonbootmuseum
Felix Meritis Building
Historisch Museum
Begijnhof
De Looier Market
Bijbels Museum
Cromhouthuizen
Rommelmarkt
Rasphuis
Flower Market
Metz & Co.
De Appel
Stadsschouwburg
American Hotel
Brouwersgracht
Prinsengracht
Keizersgracht
Herengracht
Singel
Leidsegracht
Lauriergracht
Bloemgracht
Egelantiersgracht
Raadhuisstraat
Leidsestraat
Rozengracht
Elandsgracht
Spuistraat
Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal
Reestraat
Berenstraat
Wolvenstr
Runstraat
Huidenstraat
Beulingstraat
Leliegracht
Reguliersgracht
Blauwburgwal
Oude Leliestraat
Driekoningenstraat
Gasthuismolensteeg
Treeftstr
Wijdesteeg
Raamsteeg
Stijlgracht
Wijde Heisteeg
Heisteeg
Vijzelstraat
Heiligeweg
Rozengracht
Laurierstraat
Lijnbaansgracht
Passeerdersstraat
Looiersgracht
Prinsengracht
Keizersgracht
Herengracht
Singel
Leidsegracht
Raamstraat
Molenpad
Marnixstraat
Nassaukade
3e Helmersstraat
2e Helmersstraat
Leidseplein
Leidsegracht
Lange Leidsedwarsstraat
Konte Leidsedwarsstraat
Prinsengracht
Keizersgracht
Kerkstraat
Spiegelstraat
Nieuwe Spiegelstraat
Hirschpass
Max Euweplein
Ziesenisskade
Weteringschans
Stadhouderskade
Vossiusstraat
Singelgracht
1e Weteringdwarsstraat
2e Weteringdwarsstraat
Lijnbaansgracht
Karthuizers Straatje
Boomstraat
Zeemanstraat
Lindenstraat
Prinsengracht
Keizersgracht
Herengracht
Singel
Prinsenstraat
Herengracht
Keizersgracht
Prinsengracht
Anjeliersstraat
Tuinstraat
Egelantiersstraat
Egelantiersgracht
Nieuwe Leliestraat
Bloemgracht
Bloemstraat
Westermarkt
Westermarkt
Raadhuisstraat
Singel
Singel
Singel
Hartenstraat
Reestraat
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OLD CENTRE
DE GOUDEN BOCHT
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Prostitution Info Centre
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Munttoren
Tuschinski
Kattenkabinet
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Schiller Hotel
ABN-AMRO Bank
Van Loon Museum
Amstelveld
Amstelkerk
Amstelsluizen
Luthersekerk
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Nieuwmarkt
Waterlooplein
Centraal Station
0
200 m

### Leliegracht

Further down Prinsengracht, Leliegracht leads off to the left, one of the tiny radial canals that cut across the Grachtengordel. It holds one of the city's finest Art Nouveau buildings, a tall and striking building at the Leliegracht-Keizersgracht junction designed by Gerrit van Arkel in 1905. It was originally the headquarters of a life insurance company – hence the two mosaics with angels recommending policies to bemused earthlings.

### The Anne Frank Huis

Prinsengracht 263 ⓣ020/556 7100, ⓦwww.annefrank.nl. Daily: mid-March to mid-Sept 9am–9pm; mid-Sept to mid-March 9am–7pm; closed Yom Kippur. €7.50, 10- to 17-year-olds €3.50, under-9s free. Easily the city's most visited sight, the Anne Frank Huis is where the young diarist and her family hid from the Germans during World War II. Since the posthumous publication of her diaries, Anne Frank has become extraordinarily famous, in the first instance for recording the iniquities of the Holocaust, and latterly as a symbol of the fight against oppression and in particular racism. The family spent over two years in hiding here, but were eventually betrayed and dispatched to Westerbork – the transit camp in the north of the country where most Dutch Jews were processed before being moved to Belsen or Auschwitz. Of the eight souls hidden in the annexe, only Otto Frank survived; Anne and her sister died of typhus within a short time of each other in Belsen, just one week before the German surrender.

Anne Frank's diary was among the few things left behind in the annexe. It was retrieved by one of the people who had helped the Franks and handed to Anne's father on his return from Auschwitz; he later decided to publish it. Since its appearance in 1947, it has been constantly in print, translated into over sixty languages, and has sold millions of copies. Despite being so popular, the house has managed to preserve a sense of intimacy, a poignant witness to the personal nature of the Franks' sufferings. The rooms the Franks occupied for two years have been left much the same as they were during the war – even down to the movie star pin-ups in Anne's bedroom and the marks on the wall recording the children's heights. Video clips of the family in particular and the Holocaust in general give the background. Anne Frank was one of about 100,000 Dutch Jews who died during World War II, but this, her final home, provides one of the most enduring testaments to its horrors.

### The Westerkerk

April–Sept Mon–Fri 11am–3pm. Free. Trapped in her house, Anne Frank liked to listen to the bells

▼ HOMOMONUMENT

of the Westerkerk, just along Prinsengracht, until they were taken away to be melted down for the German war effort. The church still dominates the district, its 85-metre tower (May–Sept Mon–Sat 10am–5pm; €5) – without question Amsterdam's finest – soaring graciously above its surroundings. The church was designed by Hendrick de Keyser and completed in 1631 as part of the general enlargement of the city, but whereas the exterior is all studied elegance, the interior is bare and plain. The church is also the reputed resting place of Rembrandt, though the location of his pauper's tomb is not known. Instead, a small memorial in the north aisle commemorates the artist, close to the spot where his son Titus was buried. Rembrandt adored his son – as evidenced by numerous portraits – and the boy's death dealt a final crushing blow to the ageing and embittered artist, who died just over a year later.

### Westermarkt

Westermarkt, an open square in the shadow of the Westerkerk, possesses two evocative memorials. At the back of the church, beside Keizersgracht, are the three pink granite triangles (one each for the past, present and future) of the **Homomonument**, the world's first memorial to persecuted gays and lesbians, commemorating all those who died at the hands of the Nazis. It was designed by Karin Daan and recalls the pink triangles the Germans made homosexuals sew onto their clothes during World War II.

Nearby, on the south side of the church by Prinsengracht, is a small but beautifully crafted **statue of Anne Frank** by the modern Dutch sculptor Mari Andriessen – also the creator

▲ STATUE OF ANNE FRANK

of the dockworker statue outside Amsterdam's Portuguese Synagogue (see p.99).

### The Theatermuseum

Herengracht 168 ☎020/551 3300, ⓦwww.tin.nl. Mon–Fri 11am–5pm, Sat & Sun 1–5pm. €4.50. A brief walk from the Westermarkt, the Theatermuseum holds an enjoyable collection of theatrical bygones, from props through to stage sets, with a particularly good section devoted to puppets and puppetry. The museum, which spreads over into the adjoining building, also offers a lively programme of temporary exhibitions, but it's the house itself which is perhaps of most interest. Dating from 1638, Herengracht 168 has a fetching sandstone facade to a design by Philip Vingboons, the most talented architect involved in the creation of the Grachtengordel. The house was built for Michael de Pauw, a leading light in the East India Company, and the interior sports a riot of flamboyant stucco work, romantic Italianate wall paintings and a splendid spiral staircase.

### Huis Bartolotti

Herengracht 170–172. No public access. Next door to the Theatermuseum, the Huis Bartolotti is a tad earlier and a good deal flashier than its neighbour, its pirouetting facade of red-brick and stone dotted with urns and columns, faces and shells. The house is an excellent illustration of the Dutch Renaissance style, and as such is much more ornate than the typical Amsterdam canal house. The architect was Hendrick de Keyser and a director of the West India Company, Willem van den Heuvel, footed the bill. Heuvel inherited a fortune from his Italian uncle and changed his name in his honour to Bartolotti – hence the name of the house.

▲ LEIDSEPLEIN

### Westermarkt to Leidsegracht

Between Westermarkt and Leidsegracht, the main canals are intercepted by a trio of cross-streets, which are themselves divided into shorter streets, collectively known as "Nine Streets", mostly named after animals whose pelts were once used in the district's tanning industry. There's Reestraat (Deer Street), Hartenstraat (Hart), Berenstraat (Bear) and Wolvenstraat (Wolf), not to mention Huidenstraat (Street of Hides) and Runstraat – a "run" being a bark used in tanning. The tanners are long gone and today these are eminently appealing shopping streets, where you can buy everything from carpets to handmade chocolates, wacky toothbrushes to beeswax candles.

### The Woonbootmuseum

Prinsengracht 296 ☎020/427 0750, ⓦwww.houseboatmuseum.nl. March–Oct Tues–Sun 11am–5pm; Nov–Feb Fri–Sun 11am–5pm. €3. This 1914 Dutch houseboat doubles as a tourist attraction with a handful of explanatory plaques about life on the water. Some 3000 barges and houseboats are connected to the city's gas and electricity networks. They are regularly inspected and strict controls ensure their numbers don't engulf the city's waterways.

### The Felix Meritis Building

Keizersgracht 324. A Neoclassical monolith of 1787, this mansion was built to house the artistic and scientific activities of the eponymous society, which was the cultural focus of the city's upper crust for nearly a hundred years. Dutch cultural aspirations did not, however, impress everyone. It's said that when Napoleon visited the city the entire building was redecorated for his reception, only to have him stalk out in disgust, claiming that the place stank of tobacco. Oddly enough, it later became the headquarters of the Dutch Communist Party, but they sold it to the council who now lease it to the Felix Meritis Foundation for experimental

and avant-garde art workshops, conferences, discussions and debates.

### The Bijbels Museum

Herengracht 366–368 ⓣ020/624 2436, ⓦwww.bijbelsmuseum.nl. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 11am–5pm. €6. The graceful and commanding Cromhouthuizen, at Herengracht 364–370, consists of four matching stone mansions, frilled with tendrils, carved fruit and scrollwork, and graced by dinky little bull's-eye windows and elegant gables. They were built in the 1660s for one of Amsterdam's wealthy merchant families, the Cromhouts, and two of them now house the Bijbels Museum. This contains a splendid selection of old Bibles, including the first Dutch-language Bible ever printed, dating from 1477, and a series of idiosyncratic models of Solomon's Temple and the Jewish Tabernacle plus a scattering of archeological finds from Palestine and Egypt brought back to the Netherlands in the nineteenth century.

### Leidseplein

Lying on the edge of the Grachtengordel, Leidseplein is the bustling hub of Amsterdam's nightlife, a rather cluttered and disorderly open space that has never had much character. The square once marked the end of the road in from Leiden and, as horse-drawn traffic was banned from the centre long ago, it was here that the Dutch left their horses and carts – a sort of equine car park. Today, it's quite the opposite: continual traffic made up of trams, bikes, cars and pedestrians gives the place a frenetic feel, and the surrounding side streets are jammed with bars, restaurants and clubs in a bright jumble of jutting signs and neon lights. On a good night, however, Leidseplein can be Amsterdam at its carefree, exuberant best.

### Stadsschouwburg

Leidseplein. Leidseplein holds one building of architectural note, the grandiose Stadsschouwburg, a neo-Renaissance edifice dating from 1894 which was so widely criticized for its clumsy vulgarity that the city council of the day temporarily withheld the money for decorating the exterior. Home to the National Ballet and Opera until the Muziektheater (see p.95) was completed on Waterlooplein in 1986, it is now used for theatre, dance and music performances, as well as hosting visiting English-language theatre companies. However, its most popular function is as the place where the Ajax football team gather on the balcony to wave to the crowds whenever they win anything – as they often do.

### The American Hotel

Leidsekade 97. Just off Leidseplein, the American Hotel is one of the city's oddest buildings, a monumental and slightly disconcerting rendering of Art Nouveau, with angular turrets, chunky dormer windows and fancy brickwork. Completed in 1902, the present structure takes its name from its demolished predecessor, which was decorated with statues and murals of North American scenes. Inside the present hotel is the *Café Americain*, once the fashionable haunt of Amsterdam's literati, but now a mainstream location for coffee and lunch. The Art Nouveau decor is well worth a

▲ THE AMERICAN HOTEL

peek – an artful combination of stained glass, shallow arches and geometric patterned brickwork.

### Leidsestraat to Metz & Co

Heading northeast from Leidseplein, Leidsestraat is a crowded shopping street, a long, slender gauntlet of fashion and shoe shops of little distinction that leads across the three main canals up towards the Singel and the Flower Market (see p.77). En route, at the corner of Keizersgracht, is **Metz & Co** department store, which was, when it was built, the tallest commercial building in the city – one reason why the owners were able to entice Gerrit Rietveld, the leading architectural light of the De Stijl movement, to add a rooftop glass and metal showroom in 1933. The showroom has survived and is now a café offering one of the best views over the centre in this predominantly low-rise city.

▼ METZ CAFE

### The Spiegelkwartier

One block east of Metz & Co, along Keizersgracht, is Nieuwe Spiegelstraat, an appealing mixture of bookshops and corner cafés that extends south into Spiegelgracht to form the Spiegelkwartier – home to the pricey end of Amsterdam's antiques trade. It's a lovely district to browse around, and while you're here be sure to pop into **De Appel**, a lively centre for contemporary art at Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 10 (Tues–Sun 11am–6pm; €4; Ⓦ www.deappel.nl).

### De Gouden Bocht

Nieuwe Spiegelstraat meets the elegant sweep of Herengracht near the west end of the so-called De Gouden Bocht (the **Golden Bend**), where the canal is overlooked by a long sequence of double-fronted mansions that are some of the most opulent dwellings in the

city. Most of these houses were extensively remodelled in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Characteristically, they have double stairways leading to the entrance, underneath which the small door was for the servants, whilst up above the majority are topped off by the ornamental cornices that were fashionable at the time. Classical references are common, both in form – pediments, columns and pilasters – and decoration, from scrolls and vases through to geometric patterns inspired by ancient Greece.

### The Museum Willet-Holthuysen

Herengracht 605 ⓣ020/523 1822, ⓦwww.museumwilletholthuysen.nl. Mon–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat & Sun 11am–5pm. €4. The coal-trading Holthuysen family occupied this elegant, late seventeenth-century mansion until the last of the line, Sandra Willet-Holthuysen, gifted her home and its contents to the city in 1895. Modified and renovated on several occasions, the most striking room is the Blue Room, which has been returned to its original eighteenth-century Rococo appearance – a flashy and ornate style that the Dutch merchants held to be the epitome of refinement and good taste. Other rooms have the more cluttered appearance of the nineteenth century – the Dining Room being a case in point – and the house also displays a small collection of glass, silver, majolica and ceramics assembled by Sandra's husband, Abraham Willet. At the back of the house are the formal gardens, a neat pattern of miniature hedges graced by the occasional stone statue.

### The Amstel and the Magere Brug

The Grachtengordel comes to an abrupt halt at the River Amstel, long the main route into the city, with goods arriving by barge and boat to be traded for the imported materials held in Amsterdam's many warehouses. The **Magere Brug** (Skinny Bridge), spanning the Amstel at the end of Kerkstraat, is the most famous and arguably the cutest of the city's many swing bridges. Legend has it that this bridge, which dates back to about 1670, replaced an even older and skinnier version, originally built by two sisters who lived on either

▲ MUSEUM WILLET-HOLTHUYSEN

▲ MAGERE BRUG

side of the river and were fed up with having to walk so far to see each other.

### The Amstel Sluizen

The Amstel Sluizen – or Amstel locks – are closed every night when the council begin the process of sluicing out the canals. A huge pumping station on an island out to the east of the city then starts to pump fresh water from the IJsselmeer into the canal system; similar locks on the west side of the city are left open for the surplus to flow into the IJ and, from there, out to sea. The watery content of the canals is thus regularly refreshed – though, despite this, and with three centuries of algae, prams, shopping trolleys and a few hundred rusty bikes, the water is only appealing as long as you're not actually in it.

### The Amstelveld, Amstelkerk and Reguliersgracht

Doubling back from the Amstel Sluizen, turn left along the north side of Prinsengracht and you soon reach the small open space of the **Amstelveld**, a mini-park that is bordered by one of the city's oldest churches, the plain seventeenth-century white wooden **Amstelkerk**. The Monday **market** here sells flowers and plants, and is much less of a scrum than the Bloemenmarkt (see opposite), with lots of friendly advice on what to buy. It's here also that Prinsengracht intersects with **Reguliersgracht**, one of the three surviving radial canals that cut across the Grachtengordel – its dainty humpback bridges and greening waters overlooked by charming seventeenth- and eighteenth-century canal houses.

### Museum Van Loon

Keizersgracht 672 ⓣ020/624 5255, ⓦwww.museumvanloon.nl. Mon & Fri–Sun 11am–5pm; also March–May, July & Aug Wed & Thurs 11am–5pm. €6. The Museum Van Loon boasts the finest accessible canal house interior in Amsterdam. Built in 1672, and first occupied by the artist and pupil of Rembrandt, Ferdinand Bol, the house has been returned to something akin to its eighteenth-century appearance, with acres of wood panelling and fancy stucco work. Look out also for the ornate copper balustrade on the staircase, into which is worked the name "Van Hagen-Trip" (after a one-time owner of the house); the Van Loons later filled the spaces between the letters with iron curlicues to prevent their children falling through. The top-floor landing has several pleasant paintings sporting Roman figures, and one of the

bedrooms – the "painted room" – is decorated with a Romantic painting of Italy – a favourite motif in Amsterdam from around 1750 to 1820. The oddest items are the fake bedroom doors: the eighteenth-century owners were so keen to avoid any lack of symmetry that they camouflaged the real bedroom doors and created imitation, decorative doors in the "correct" position instead.

### Rembrandtplein

One of the larger open spaces in the city centre, Rembrandtplein is a dishevelled bit of greenery that was formerly Amsterdam's butter market. It was renamed in 1876, and is today one of the city's nightlife centres, although its crowded restaurants and bars are firmly tourist-targeted. Rembrandt's statue stands in the middle, his back wisely turned against the square's worst excesses, including a platoon of life-size bronze statues copied from Rembrandt's most famous painting, the *Night Watch* (see p.110). Of the prodigious number of cafés and bars here, only the café of the *Schiller Hotel* at no. 26 stands out, with an original Art Deco interior somewhat reminiscent of an ocean liner.

### The Tuschinski

Reguliersbreestraat 26–28. Reservations on ⓣ 0900 1458, ⓦ www.pathe.nl. Tucked in among Reguliersbreestraat's slot-machine arcades, fast-food outlets and sex shops, the Tuschinski is the city's most extraordinary cinema, with a marvellously well-preserved Art Deco interior. Opened in 1921 by a Polish Jew, Abram Tuschinski, the cinema boasts Expressionist paintings, coloured marbles and a wonderful carpet, handwoven in Marrakesh to an original design. Tuschinski died in Auschwitz in 1942, and there's a plaque in the cinema's foyer in his memory. It now shows mainstream cinematic blockbusters.

▲ MUNTTOREN

### The Munttoren and Bloemenmarkt

Tiny Muntplein is dominated by the **Munttoren**, an imposing fifteenth-century tower that was once part of the old city wall. Later, the tower was adopted as the municipal mint – hence its name – and Hendrik de Keyser, in one of his last commissions, added a flashy spire in 1620. A few metres away, the floating Bloemenmarkt, or **flower market** (daily 9am–5pm, some stalls close on Sun), extends along the southern bank of the Singel. Popular with locals and tourists alike, the market is one of the main suppliers of flowers to central Amsterdam, but its blooms and bulbs now share stall space with souvenir clogs, garden gnomes, Delftware and similar tat.

# Shops

### Bakkerij Paul Année
Runstraat 25 ☎020/623 5322. Mon–Sat 8am–5pm. The best wholegrain and sourdough breads in town, bar none, all made from organic grains.

### Boekie Woekie
Berenstraat 16 ☎020/639 0507. Mon–Sat noon–6pm & Sun 1–6pm. Sells books on – and by – leading Dutch artists and graphic designers, and entertaining postcards too.

### Book Traffic
Leliegracht 50 ☎020/620 4690. Mon–Sat 11am–6pm & Sun noon–5pm. An excellent and well-organized selection of mostly secondhand books with a multitude of English titles.

### Brinkman
Singel 319, corner Ramsteeg ☎020/623 8353. Mon–Fri 10am–5pm & Sat 11am–5pm. A stalwart of the Amsterdam antiquarian book trade, stocking good local stuff, Brinkman has occupied the same premises for forty years.

### Eduard Kramer
Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 64 ☎020/623 0832, ⓦwww.antique-tileshop.nl. Tues–Sun 10.30am–6pm. Holds a wonderful selection of Dutch tiles from the fifteenth century onwards; it also operates an online ordering service.

### Gerda's
Runstraat 16 ☎020/624 2912. Mon–Fri 9am–6pm & Sat 9am–5pm. Amsterdam is full of flower shops, but this one is the most imaginative and sensual. Bouquets to melt the hardest of hearts.

### Jan Best
Keizersgracht 357, corner Huidenstraat ☎020/623 2736. Mon–Fri 10.30am–6pm & Sat 10am–5pm. Famed antique lamp shop, with some wonderfully kitsch examples as well as offbeat new lamps and lights.

### Jojo
Huidenstraat 23 ☎020/623 3476. Mon noon–6pm, Tues–Sat 11am–6pm & Sun 2–6pm. Decent secondhand clothes from all eras. Particularly good for suit jackets and shirts.

### De Kaaskamer
Runstraat 7 (Grachtengordel west) ☎020/623 3483. Mon noon–6pm, Tues–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–5pm & Sun noon–5pm. Friendly shop with a comprehensive selection of Dutch cheeses – much more than ordinary Edam – plus olives and international wines.

### Lady Day
Hartenstraat 9 ☎020/623 5820. Mon–Sat 11am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm & Sun 1–6pm. Good-quality secondhand clothes with the emphasis on assorted tackle from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Strong on suits and vintage dresses.

### Lanskroon
Singel 385, south end of Spuistraat ☎020/623 7743. Tues–Fri 8am–5.30pm, Sat 8am–5pm & Sun 9.30am–5pm. Popular pastry shop, with a small area for on-the-spot consumption.

### Laura Dols
Wolvenstraat 6 & 7 ☎020/624 9066, ⓦwww.lauradols.nl. Mon–Sat 11am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm & Sun 2–6pm. Superb – and superbly creative – assortment of vintage clothing from dresses through to hats. Its forte is 1940s and 1950s gear.

### Puccini
Singel 184, junction of Oude Leliestraat ⓣ020/427 8341, ⓦwww.puccinibomboni.com. Mon noon–5pm, Tues–Sat 11am–6pm & Sun noon–5pm. Without doubt the best chocolatier in town, selling a wonderfully creative range of chocs in all sorts of shapes and sizes. This mini-chain has also abandoned the tweeness of the traditional chocolatier for brisk modern decor. Also at Staalstraat 17 (see p.60).

### Scheltema
Koningsplein 20 ⓣ020/523 1411. Daily 10am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm. Amsterdam's biggest and best bookshop. Six floors of absolutely everything and although most of the books are in Dutch, there are good English sections too.

### 't Winkeltje
Prinsengracht 228 ⓣ020/625 1352. Mon 1–5.30pm, Tues–Fri 10am–5.30pm & Sat 10am–5pm. Jumble of bargain-basement glassware and crockery, candlesticks, antique tin toys, kitsch souvenirs, old apothecaries' jars and flasks. Perfect for browsing.

### Witte Tandenwinkel
Runstraat 5 ⓣ020/623 3443. Mon 1–6pm, Tues–Fri 10am–6pm & Sat 10am–5pm. The "White Teeth Shop" sells wacky toothbrushes and just about every dental hygiene accoutrement you could ever need and then some.

## Coffeeshops

### The Bulldog
Leidseplein 15. Daily 9am–1am. The biggest and most famous of the coffeeshop chains, and a long way from its pokey Red-Light-District-dive origins. This, the main Leidseplein branch (the Palace), housed in a former police station, has a large cocktail bar, coffeeshop, juice bar and souvenir shop, all with separate entrances. It's big and brash, not at all the place for a quiet smoke, though the dope they sell (packaged up in neat little brand-labelled bags) is reliably good.

### Global Chillage
Kerkstraat 51. Daily 1pm–1am. A celebrated slice of Amsterdam dope culture, always comfortably filled with tie-dyed stone-heads propped up against the walls, so chilled they're horizontal.

### Mellow Yellow
Vijzelgracht 33. Mon–Thurs 9am–midnight, Fri–Sun 8am–1am. Sparse but bright coffeeshop with a small but good-quality dope list. It's a little out of the way, but it makes up for it in friendliness.

### The Otherside
Reguliersdwarsstraat 6. Daily 11am–11pm. Essentially a gay coffeeshop (in Dutch, "the other side" is a euphemism for gay), but straight-friendly and the atmosphere is relaxed and good fun.

### Siberië
Brouwersgracht 11. Sun–Thurs 11am–11pm, Fri & Sat 11am–midnight. Very relaxed, very friendly, and worth a visit whether you want to smoke or not.

## Cafés and tearooms

### Buffet van Odette & Yvette
Herengracht 309. Mon–Fri 8.30am–5pm, Sat 10am–5pm & Sun noon–5pm. Just walking past will get your taste buds going:

a serious treat for breakfast or lunch.

### Greenwood's

Singel 103. Daily 9.30am–7pm. Small, English-style teashop in the basement of a canal house. Pies and sandwiches, pots of tea – and a decent breakfast.

## Restaurants

### De Belhamel

Brouwersgracht 60 ☎020/622 1095. Daily 6–10pm. Smashing restaurant where the Art Nouveau decor makes a delightful setting and the menu is short but extremely well-chosen, mixing Dutch with French dishes. Main courses at around €20–25.

### Bolhoed

Prinsengracht 60 ☎020/626 1803. Daily noon–10pm. Something of an Amsterdam institution, the daily changing menu here features familiar vegan and vegetarian options, with organic beer to wash it down. Mains at around €14.

### Chez Georges

Herenstraat 3 ☎020/626 3332. Daily from 6pm except Wed & Sun. This much lauded Belgian restaurant offers immaculately presented dishes from a well-chosen menu. The premises are decorated in brisk modern style and main courses cost e20 and up.

### Christophe

Leliegracht 46 ☎020/625 0807. Tues–Sat 6.30–10.30pm. Classic Michelin-starred restaurant, in an attractive canalside premises too, whose gastronomic subtleties draw inspiration from the olive-oil-and-basil flavours of southern France and North African cuisine. The aubergine terrine with cumin has been dubbed the best vegetarian dish in the world. Advance reservations essential. Main courses €25 and up.

### Cilubang

Runstraat 10 ☎020/626 9755. Tues–Sun 6–11pm. Tiny but much liked Indonesian restaurant, with a friendly atmosphere, serving well-presented, spicy dishes at reasonable prices with mains hovering at around €14.

### Damsteeg

Reestraat 28 ☎020/627 8794. Mon–Sat 2pm–11pm. First-rate, French-inspired cuisine with more than the occasional Dutch gastronomic flourish, served up in a charmingly renovated old canal house. Mains hover around €20.

### Dynasty

Reguliersdwarsstraat 30 ☎020/626 8400. Mon & Wed–Sun 5.30–11pm. Well-established restaurant offering a substantial choice of Indochinese food, with both Vietnamese and, more especially, Thai options. The subdued atmosphere suits the prices with main courses averaging €20–25.

### Golden Temple

Utrechtsestraat 126 ☎020/626 8560. Daily 5–9pm. Laidback place with a little more soul than the average Amsterdam veggie joint. Well-prepared food and pleasant, attentive service. No alcohol and non-smoking throughout.

### Le Pêcheur

Reguliersdwarsstraat 32 ☎020/624 3121. Mon–Fri noon–10.30pm & Sat 5–10.30pm. Seafood restaurant with a well-considered menu, both set menus and à la carte with mains around €20.

### Le Soleil

Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 56 ☎020/622 7147. Daily 10am–6pm. Dinky little

inexpensive pancake house (once visited by the Queen) which does what it does outstandingly well – even in this the land of the pancake.

### Le Zinc … et les Dames

Prinsengracht 999 ☎020/622 9044. Mon–Sat 5.30–11pm. Wonderfully atmospheric little place serving good-quality, simple fare with main courses averaging €20–25; there's a particularly good wine list too.

### Prego

Herenstraat 25 ☎020/638 0148. Daily from 6pm. Informal French restaurant with sharp modern decor offering an exceptionally inventive menu including such delights as stuffed guinea fowl and chicory cooked every which way. Mains €20 and up.

### Puri Mas

Lange Leidsedwarsstraat 37 ☎020/627 7627. Daily from 5pm. Exceptionally good value for money Indonesian, on a street better known for rip-offs. Friendly and informed service preludes spectacular *rijsttafels*, both meat and vegetarian.

### Shiva

Reguliersdwarsstraat 72 ☎020/624 8713. Daily from 5pm. Competent Indian restaurant in terms of quality and price, with a wide selection of dishes, all expertly prepared and moderately priced.

### Tashi Deleg

Utrechtsestraat 65 ☎020/620 6624. Daily from 5pm. Highly recommended Tibetan restaurant, with friendly and accommodating staff dishing up authentic food for around €20 for two courses.

### Tempo Doeloe

Utrechtsestraat 75 ☎020/625 6718. Daily from 6pm. Reliable, reasonably priced quality place close to Rembrandtplein. As with all Indonesian restaurants, be guided by the waiter when choosing – some of the dishes are very hot indeed.

### D'Theeboom

Singel 210 ☎020/623 8420. Daily 6–10pm. Traditional French restaurant in an old and attractive canal house a short walk from Dam Square. Relaxed atmosphere; attentive service. Mains from around €20.

### Van de Kaart

Prinsengracht 512 ☎020/625 9232. Mon–Sat 6.30–11pm. Slick and chic restaurant, with an excellent and enterprising (French-inspired) menu including such delights as lobster carpaccio, home-cured bacon and pumpkin-stuffed ravioli. The selection of wines complements with vim and gusto.

## Bars

### April

Reguliersdwarsstraat 37. Daily from 2pm. On the itinerary of almost every gay visitor to Amsterdam, it's lively and cosmopolitan, with a good selection of foreign newspapers, cakes and coffee, and a small dance floor at the back. Happy hour Monday to Saturday 6–7pm and 11pm–midnight and special two-for-one deals on Sunday 6–8pm.

### De Hegeraad

Noordermarkt 34. Lovingly maintained, old-fashioned brown café with a loyal clientele. The back room, furnished with red plush and paintings, is the

perfect place to relax with a hot chocolate.

### Het Molenpad

Prinsengracht 653. This is one of the most appealing brown cafés in the city – a long, dark bar that fills up fast with a young, professional crowd after 6pm.

### Oosterling

Utrechtsestraat 140. Stone-floored, neighbourhood bar-cum-off-licence that's been owned by the same family for donkeys' years. Kitted out in attractive traditional style, it specializes in *jenever* (gin) with dozens of brands and varieties. No mobile phones.

### Het Papeneiland

Prinsengracht 2. With its wood panelling, antique Delft tiles and ancient stove, this is one of the cosiest bars in the Grachtengordel, though it does get packed late at night with a garrulous crew.

### De Pieper

Prinsengracht 424. Laidback neighbourhood brown bar with rickety old furniture and a mini-terrace beside the canal.

### De Prins

Prinsengracht 124. With its well-worn decor and chatty atmosphere, this popular and lively brown bar offers a wide range of drinks and a well-priced bar menu with food served from 10am to 9pm.

### Spanjer & van Twist

Leliegracht 60. Hip café-bar with an arty air and brisk modern fittings. Tasty snacks and light meals plus an outside mini-terrace right on the canal. Lunch served daily 10am–4pm, evening meals from 6pm.

### Van Puffelen

Prinsengracht 377. This long-established and popular spot is divided into two with a brown café-bar on one side and a (very average) restaurant on the other. The café-bar (daily 3pm to 1 or 2am) is an appealing place to drink, with a good choice of international brews.

▲ VAN PUFFELEN

### Vive la Vie

Amstelstraat 7. Daily from 4pm. Small, campy bar, patronized mostly, but not exclusively, by women and transvestites. Quiet during the week, it steams on the weekend.

### Walem

Keizersgracht 449. A chic café-bar – cool, light, and vehemently un-brown. The clientele is stylish, and the food is a kind of hybrid French-Dutch; there's also a wide selection of newspapers and magazines, including some in English. Breakfast in the garden during the summer is a highlight. Usually packed. Kitchen daily 10am–10pm.

# Clubs and venues

### Boom Chicago

Leidseplein 12 ⓣ020/423 0101, ⓦwww.boomchicago.nl. Something of a phenomenon in Amsterdam, this rapid-fire improv comedy troupe hailing from the US performs at the Leidseplein Theater nightly to crowds of both tourists and locals alike. With inexpensive food, cocktails and beer served in pitchers, the comedy need not be funny – but it is.

### Café Alto

Korte Leidsedwarsstraat 115 ⓣ020/626 3249, ⓦwww.jazz-cafe-alto.nl. Daily from 9pm. It's worth hunting down this legendary little jazz bar just off Leidseplein for its quality modern jazz, performed every night from around 10pm until 3am (even later at the weekend). It's big on atmosphere, though slightly cramped, but entry is free.

### Carré Theatre

Amstel 115–125 ⓣ020/524 9452, ⓦwww.theatercarre.nl. A splendid late nineteenth-century structure (originally built for a circus) comprises the ultimate venue for Dutch folk artists, and hosts all kinds of top international acts – anything from Van Morrison to Carmen, with reputable touring orchestras and opera companies squeezed in between.

### Escape

Rembrandtplein 11 ⓣ020/622 1111, ⓦwww.escape.nl. Thurs–Sun 11pm–4/5am. This vast club has space enough to house 2000 people, but its glory days – when it was home to Amsterdam's cutting edge Chemistry nights – are long gone and it now focuses on weekly clubnights that pull in crowds of mainstream punters.

### Exit

Reguliersdwarsstraat 42 ⓣ020/625 8788. Fri & Sat midnight–5am. A classic gay club ideally situated for the fall-out from the surrounding nightlife, with four bars playing different music from R&B to house. Attracts an upbeat, cruisey crowd. Predominantly male, though women are admitted.

### Jimmy Woo

Korte Leidsedwarsstraat 18 ⓣ020/626 3150. Wed–Sat 11pm–3/4am, Sun 8pm–1am. Intimate and stylish club spread over two floors. Upstairs, the black lacquered walls, Japanese lamps and cosy booths with leather couches ooze sexy chic, while downstairs a packed dance floor throbs under hundreds of oscillating lightbulbs studded into the ceiling. Popular with young, well-dressed locals so look smart if you want to join in.

### Melkweg (Milky Way)

Lijnbaansgracht 234a ⓣ020/531 8181, ⓦwww.melkweg.nl. Probably Amsterdam's most famous entertainment venue, plus one of the city's prime multimedia arts centres, with a young, hip clientele. A former dairy (hence the name) just round the corner from Leidseplein, with two separate halls for live music, putting on a broad range of bands covering everything from reggae to rock, all of which lean towards the "alternative". Excellent DJ sessions go on late at the weekend, with Que Pasa providing a Latino flavour to Friday nights and anything from dancehall to indie pop thrown down on Saturdays.

There's also a monthly film programme, a theatre, gallery and café-restaurant (Marnixstraat entrance; Wed–Sun noon–9pm).

### Nachttheater Sugar Factory

Lijnbaansgracht 238 ⓣ020/627 0008, ⓦwww.sugarfactory.nl. Nightly except Tues. Busy Leidseplein's latest addition is the recently opened "theatrical nightclub", which hosts a stimulating programme of cabaret, live music, poetry and theatre, plus a late-night club that kicks off after the show. Pulls in a young and artistic crowd, and features up to two events per evening.

### Odeon

Singel 460 ⓣ020/521 8555, ⓦwww.odeontheater.nl. Club Thurs–Sat 11pm–4/5am; bar Wed–Sun 6pm until late; restaurant Thurs–Sat from 6.30pm. Originally a brewery, this beautifully restored old canal house has since been a theatre, cinema and concert hall until it was gutted in a fire in 1990. Rescued, it's now a stylish nightclub and restaurant, with a splendidly decorated bar overlooking the canal.

### Paradiso

Weteringschans 6–8 ⓣ020/626 4521, ⓦwww.paradiso.nl. A converted church near the Leidseplein, revered by many for its atmosphere and excellent programme, featuring local and international bands ranging from the newly signed to the more established. Popular club nights such as Friday's Paradisoul still draw in the crowds, and look out too for DJ sets featuring live performances on Saturdays. It has been known to host classical concerts, as well as debates and multimedia events (often in conjunction with the nearby Balie centre).

# The Jordaan and Western docklands

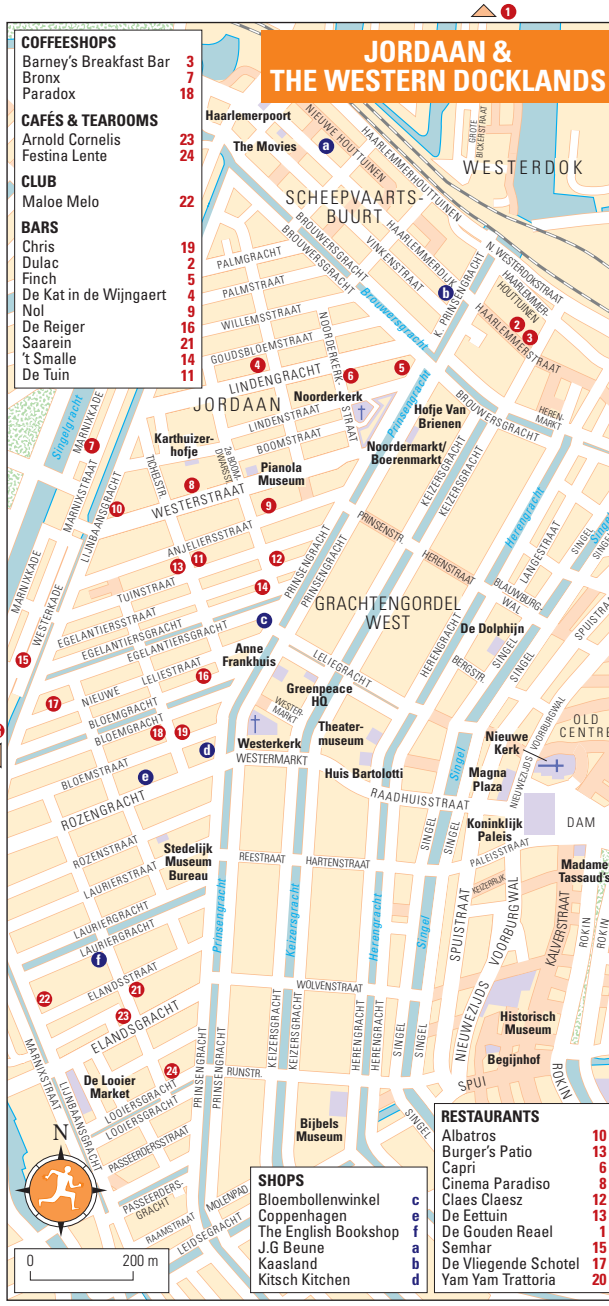
**Lying to the west of the city, the Jordaan is an easily explored area of slender canals and narrow streets flanked by an agreeable mix of modest, modern terraces and handsome seventeenth-century canal houses. It was never subject to the rigorous planning restrictions of the main canals, its streets following the lines of the original polder drainage ditches rather than any municipal outline. Traditionally it was the home of Amsterdam's working class, but its character has been transformed by a middle-class influx, and it has become one of the most sought-after residential neighbourhoods. Until the late 1970s, the inhabitants were primarily stevedores and factory workers earning a crust in the pint-sized Scheepvaartsbuurt (Shipping Quarter), edging the north of the Jordaan, now a mixed shopping and residential quarter. Just beyond, the Westerdok is the oldest part of the sprawling complex of artificial islands that today sweeps along the south side of the River IJ.**

## The Jordaan

According to dyed-in-the-wool locals, the true Jordaaner is born within earshot of the Westerkerk bells, which means that there are endless arguments as to quite where the district's southern boundary lies, though at least the other borders are clear – Prinsengracht, Brouwersgracht and Lijnbaansgracht.

The streets just north of Leidsegracht – generally deemed to be the southern border – are routinely modern, but at Elandsgracht 109 you'll find the enjoyable **De Looier antiques market** (daily except Fri 11am–5pm). The area's artery, **Rozengracht**, slices through the centre, though this wide street lost most of its character when its canal was filled in and is now a busy main road of no particular distinction. It was here, at no. 184, that Rembrandt spent the

▼ BLOEMGRACHT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GRACHTENGORDEL WEST
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last ten years of his life in diminished circumstances – a scrolled plaque distinguishes his old home.

### Rozengracht to Westerstraat

The streets and canals between Rozengracht and Westerstraat form the heart of the Jordaan and hold the district's prettiest sights. North of Rozengracht, the first canal is the **Bloemgracht** (Flower Canal), a leafy waterway dotted with houseboats and arched by dinky little bridges, its network of cross-streets sprinkled with cafés, bars and idiosyncratic shops. A narrow cross-street – 2e Egelantiersdwarsstraat and its continuation 2e Tuindwarsstraat and 2e Anjeliersdwarsstraat – runs north from Bloemgracht flanked by many of the Jordaan's more fashionable stores and clothing shops as well as some of its liveliest bars and cafés. At the end is workaday **Westerstraat**, a busy modern thoroughfare dotted with more mainstream shops.

▲ BLOEMGRACHT HOUSES

### Pianola Museum

Westerstraat 106 Ⓜ www.pianola.nl. Sun 2–5pm. €5. The small but charming Pianola Museum has a collection of pianolas and automatic music-machines that dates from the beginning of the twentieth century. Fifteen have been restored to working order and demonstrations are a delight. These machines, which work on rolls of perforated paper, were the jukeboxes of their day, and the museum has a vast collection of over 15,000 rolls of music, some of which were "recorded" by famous pianists and composers – Gershwin, Debussy, Scott Joplin, Art Tatum and others. The museum runs a regular programme of pianola music concerts, where the rolls are played back on the restored machines (exact times are on their website).

▲ PIANOLA MUSEUM

### The Noorderkerk

Noorderkerkstraat. Mon, Thurs & Sat 11am–1pm, Wed 11am–3pm, Sun 1.30–4pm. Free. Noorderkerk is Hendrik de Keyser's last creation

▲ NOORDERKERK

and probably his least successful, finished two years after his death in 1623. A bulky, overbearing brick building, it represented a radical departure from the conventional church designs of the time, having a symmetrical Greek-cross floor plan, with four equally proportioned arms radiating out from a steepled centre. Uncompromisingly dour, it proclaimed the serious intent of the Calvinists who worshipped here in so far as the pulpit was at the centre and not at the front of the church, a symbolic break with the Catholic past.

### Noordermarkt

The Noordermarkt, the somewhat inconclusive square outside the church, holds a statue of three figures bound to each other, a powerful tribute to the bloody Jordaanoproer riot of 1934, part of a successful campaign to stop the government cutting unemployment benefit during the Depression. The square also hosts some of Amsterdam's best **markets** – an antiques and general household goods market on Monday mornings (9am–1pm) and the popular farmers' market, the Boerenmarkt, on Saturdays (9am–3pm). Saturday also sees a bird market (8am–1pm), but its caged birds are not everyone's cup of tea.

### Lindengracht

The Lindengracht ("Canal of Limes") lost its waterway decades ago, but has had a prominent role in local folklore since the day in 1886 when a policeman made an ill-advised attempt to stop an eel-pulling contest. Horrible as it sounds, eel-pulling was a popular pastime hereabouts with tug-o'-war teams holding tight to either end of the poor creature, which was smeared with soap to make the entertainment last a little longer. The crowd unceremoniously bundled the policeman away, but when reinforcements arrived, the whole thing got out of hand and there was a full-scale riot – the "Paling-Oproer" – which lasted for three days and cost 26 lives.

### The Scheepvaartsbuurt and the Westerdok

Brouwersgracht marks both the northern edge of the Jordaan and the southern boundary of the Scheepvaartsbuurt – the Shipping Quarter – an unassuming neighbourhood that focuses on Haarlemmerstraat and Haarlemmerdijk, a long,

rather ordinary thoroughfare lined with bars, cafés and food shops, the architectural high point being the Art Deco interior of **The Movies** cinema (see p.154) at Haarlemmerdijk 161. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this district boomed from its location between the Brouwersgracht and the Westerdok, a narrow parcel of land dredged out of the River IJ immediately to the north and equipped with docks, warehouses and shipyards. The construction of the artificial islands took the pressure off Amsterdam's congested maritime facilities and was necessary to sustain the city's economic success. The Westerdok hung on to some of the marine trade until the 1960s, but today – bar the odd small boatyard – industry has to all intents and purposes disappeared and the area is busy reinventing itself. There is still an air of faded grittiness here, but the old forgotten warehouses – within walking distance of the centre – are rapidly being turned into bijou studios, and dozens of plant-filled houseboats are moored along the Westerdok itself and the adjoining Realengracht. Nearby, Westerpark provides a touch of green for locals, running alongside a slither of a canal.

▲ NOORDERMARKT STATUE

### Het Schip

Spaarndammerplantsoen 140. Bus #22 from CS ⓣ020/418 2885, ⓦwww.hetschip.nl. Wed–Sun 1–5pm. €5.

On the north side of Westerpark, a pedestrian tunnel leads you to Het Schip, the seminal Amsterdam School municipal housing block. A splendid example of the movement's architecture and one of Michael de Klerk's most striking projects. The building takes its name from its ship-like shape and is graced by all manner of decorative details such as wavy brick facades and misshaped windows. Housed inside the complex's former post office, the Museum Het Schip explores the history of the architectural movement and provides information on the site's main distinguishing features. Regular half-hour guided tours (€2.50) take you inside one of the restored residences – the block is still used as social housing today – and up to the main turret. Across the street the very pleasant *Lunchroom Het Schip* provides light meals.

## Shops

### Bloembollenwinkel

Prinsengracht 112 ⓣ020/421 0095. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Charming little shop selling packets of tulip bulbs in season, as well as cards and gifts such as tulip-patterned pillows and pottery. Downstairs is a small museum that charts the tulip's history from the gardens of the Ottoman Empire to becoming Amsterdam's most iconic flower.

### Coppenhagen
Rozengracht 54 ⓣ020/624 3681. Mon 1–6pm, Tues–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat 10am–5pm. Something of a Jordaan institution, this shop stocks beads and beady accessories – including everything you'll need to make your own jewellery.

### The English Bookshop
Lauriergracht 71 ⓣ020/626 4230. Tues–Sat 11am–6pm. Stocks a well-chosen collection of titles on a wide range of subjects, in particular literature, many of which you won't find elsewhere.

### J.G. Beune
Haarlemmerdijk 156 ⓣ020/624 8356. Mon–Fri 8.30am–6pm, Sat 8am–5pm. Age-old chocolatier with exquisite confectionary and enticing window displays.

### Kaasland
Haarlemmerdijk 1 ⓣ020/625 7945. Mon–Wed & Fri 8am–6.30pm, Thurs 8am–8pm, Sat 8am–5pm, Sun 10am–7pm. As the name suggests, this shop offers a huge selection of cheeses, plus bread and sandwiches.

### Kitsch Kitchen
Rozengracht 8 ⓣ020/622 8261. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm. This shop is so crammed full of chunky furniture, bowls and other kitsch home and kitchen stuff in bright primary colours, that you're bound to find something you think you need here.

## Coffeeshops

### Barney's Breakfast Bar
Haarlemmerstraat 102. Daily 7am–10pm. Something of an Amsterdam institution, this extremely popular café-cum-coffeeshop is simply the most civilized place in town to enjoy a big hit with a fine breakfast – at any time of the day. A few doors down, at no. 98, *Barney's Brasserie* affords a nice sunny spot in the morning and serves alcohol.

▲ BARNEY'S BREAKFAST BAR

### Bronx
Marnixstraat 92. Daily 10am–midnight. Smart-looking, multi-levelled place equipped with a large coma-inducing fish tank and Internet up on the mezzanine floor.

### Paradox
1e Bloemdwarsstraat 2. Daily 10am–8pm. If you're fed up with the usual coffeeshop food offerings, *Paradox* satisfies the munchies with outstanding natural food, including spectacular fresh fruit concoctions and veggie burgers.

## Cafés and tearooms

### Arnold Cornelis
Elandsgracht 78. Mon–Fri 8.30am–6pm, Sat 8.30am–5pm. Long-established confectioner and patisserie with a mouth-watering display of pastries

and cakes. Take away or eat in the snug tearoom out the back.

### Festina Lente

Looiersgracht 40b. Mon 2pm–1am, Tues–Fri 10.30am–1/3am, Sat 11am–3am, Sun noon–1am. Relaxed, mezzanine neighbourhood café-bar with mismatched furniture and armchairs to laze about on. The outside tables overlooking the canal are a suntrap in the summer when the locals come out to relax with friends for the afternoon; inside is equally cosy in the winter, and there's a good selection of board games. Service can be slow at the weekends though.

## Restaurants

### Albatros

Westerstraat 264 ⓣ020/627 9932. Mon & Thurs–Sun 6pm–11pm. This nautically adorned fish restaurant serves exceptionally good food, making it a great place to splash out and linger over a meal. Mains from €20; three-course menu of the day €30.

### Burger's Patio

2e Tuindwarsstraat 12 ⓣ020/623 6854. Daily 6pm–late. Despite the name (the site used to be occupied by a butchers), there isn't a burger in sight in this long-established convivial restaurant, which has managed to maintain its informal atmosphere without compromising on taste. Italian-inspired dishes are wonderfully presented with a good choice of daily specials. Mains from €15.

### Capri

Lindengracht 61 ⓣ020/624 4940. Daily 5–9pm, Sat from 9am. Large café-restaurant serving pizza and pasta at reasonable prices (from €7). Saturdays are usually busy with much of the joyful atmosphere of the neighbouring market, while evenings are popular with local families.

### Cinema Paradiso

Westerstraat 186 ⓣ020/623 7344. Tues–Sun 6pm–11pm. Slick, fast-moving restaurant covering all the Italian classics with vim and gusto. It's in a former moviehouse and very popular, so you may have to shout to be heard. Dress to kill/thrill. Main courses kick off at around €15.

### Claes Claesz

Egelantiersstraat 24 ⓣ020/625 5306. Wed–Sun 6–11pm. This exceptionally friendly Jordaan restaurant attracts a mixed crowd and serves excellent Dutch food. Fridays and Saturdays feature various Dutch theatrical and musical acts between the courses. Choose between two- and four-courses €25–30.

### De Eettuin

2e Tuindwarsstraat 10 ⓣ020/623 7706. Daily 5.30–11.30pm. Hefty and eminently affordable portions of Dutch food, with salad from a serve-yourself bar. Non-meat eaters can content themselves with a choice of tasty vegetarian options, and all mains (from €13) come with a choice of rice or potato.

▼ DE EETUIN

### De Gouden Reael

Zandhoek 14 ☎020/623 3883. Daily 11am–12pm. Fine French food in a unique setting up in the Westerdok. Its relaxed mezzanined interior is a good place for a coffee any time of day. The bar, as described in the novel of the same name by Jan Mens, has a long association with the dockworkers. Main courses hover around €15–20.

▲ DE GOUDEN REAEL

### Semhar

Marnixstraat 259 ☎020/638 1634. Daily 1–11pm. This small and popular restaurant's simple but authentic Ethiopian menu features meat or vegetable dishes, such as lamb, catfish or chickpeas, soaked up with large, flat, spongy bread. The vegetarian dish of lentils, spinach and pumpkin is delicious. Try the local African beer served in a calabash. Mains from €10.50.

### De Vliegende Schotel

Nieuwe Leliestraat 162 ☎020/625 2041. Daily from 4pm. Perhaps the pick of the city's cheap and wholesome vegetarian restaurants, the "Flying Saucer" serves delicious food in large portions. Lots of space, a peaceful ambience – and a good notice board. Mains around €10.

### Yam Yam Trattoria

Frederik Hendrikstraat 90 ☎020/681 5097. Tues–Sun 6–10pm. Top pizzeria and trattoria in a simple, traditional dining room, with wipe-clean table covers and an open kitchen. It attracts couples and all the hip young parents from the neighbourhood with its excellent pizza toppings, including fresh rucola and truffle sauce. Booking advised. Pizzas €10–12.

## Bars

### Chris

Bloemstraat 42. Very proud of itself for being the Jordaan's (and Amsterdam's) oldest bar, dating from 1624. Comfortable, homely atmosphere.

### Dulac

Haarlemmerstraat 118. Mon & Tues from 4pm, Wed–Sun from noon. A very appealing Art Deco grand café, with lots of nooks to sit in, housed in what was an old city bank – the metal cage doors remain but now the only money changing hands is at the bar, especially on weekends when it stays open till 3am. DJs from Thursday to Saturday play a mixture of jazz, funk and '70s & '80s tunes.

### Finch

Noordermarkt 5. This smart and cosy café-lounge bar situated near the Noorderkerk attracts a stylish, relaxed crowd, drawn by the design-school ambience, good tunes and superb location overlooking the Prinsengracht.

▲ FINCH

Lunch from noon, dinner from 6pm.

### De Kat in de Wijngaert

Lindengracht 160. With the enticing name "Cat in the Vineyard", this small bar is the epitome of the Jordaan local, and quiet enough for conversation.

### Nol

Westerstraat 109. Opens 9pm. Closed Tues. Raucous but jolly Jordaan singing bar, this luridly lit dive that closes late, especially at weekends, when the back-slapping joviality and drunken singalongs keep you rooted until the small hours.

### De Reiger

Nieuwe Leliestraat 34. Mon–Fri from 5pm, Sat & Sun from 11am. Situated in the thick of the Jordaan, this is one of the area's many meeting places, an old-style café filled with modish Amsterdammers and with faded portraits on the walls. Dinner around €18.

### Saarein

Elandsstraat 119 ⓣ020/623 4901. Tues–Sun from 5pm. Known for years for its stringent women-only policy, *Saarein* finally opened its doors to men. Though some of the former glory of this café is gone, it's still a warm, relaxing place to take it easy, with a cheerful atmosphere. Also a useful starting point for gay contacts and information.

### 't Smalle

Egelantiersgracht 12. Candle-lit and comfortable, with a pontoon on the canal out front for relaxed summer afternoons. One of Amsterdam's oldest cafés, it opened in 1786 as a *proeflokaal* – a tasting house for the (long gone) gin distillery next door.

▲ DE TUIN

### De Tuin

2e Tuindwarsstraat 13. The Jordaan has some marvellously unpretentious bars, and this is one of the best: agreeably unkempt and always filled with locals.

## Music venues

### Maloe Melo

Lijnbaansgracht 163 ⓣ020/420 4592, ⓦwww.maloemelo.nl. Dark, low-ceilinged bar, with a small back room featuring lively local blues acts every day of the week. Jam sessions Monday to Thursday.

# The Old Jewish Quarter and Eastern docklands

**Originally one of the marshiest parts of Amsterdam, the narrow slice of land sandwiched between the curve of the River Amstel, Kloveniersburgwal and the Nieuwe Herengracht was the home of Amsterdam's Jews from the sixteenth century up until World War II. By the 1920s, this Old Jewish Quarter, or the Jodenhoek ("Jews' Corner"), was one of the busiest parts of town, crowded with tenement buildings and smoking factories, its main streets holding scores of open-air stalls selling everything from pickled herrings to pots and pans. The war put paid to all this – in 1945 it lay derelict, and neither has postwar redevelopment treated it kindly. New building has robbed the district of much of its character. Its focal point, Waterlooplein, has been overwhelmed by a whopping town and concert hall complex and the once-bustling Jodenbreestraat is now bleak and very ordinary, with Mr Visserplein, at its east end, one of the city's busiest traffic junctions. Picking your way round these obstacles is not much fun, but persevere – amongst the cars and concrete are several moving reminders of the Jewish community that perished in the war. The adjacent Plantagebuurt is very different, a moderately well-to-do residential area that's home to the Artis Zoo and the excellent Verzetsmuseum (Dutch Resistance Museum). From here it's a short hop north to the reclaimed islands of the Oosterdok, where pride of place goes to the Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum (Maritime Museum).**

### The Rembrandthuis

Jodenbreestraat 6 ⓣ020/520 0400, ⓦwww.rembrandthuis.nl. Daily 10am–5pm, but times may vary with exhibitions. €7.50. St Antoniesbreestraat (see p.55) runs into Jodenbreestraat, the "Broad Street of the Jews", at one time the main centre of Jewish activity. This ancient thoroughfare is short on charm, but it is home to the Rembrandthuis, whose intricate facade is decorated with pretty wooden shutters and a dinky pediment. Rembrandt bought this house at the height of his fame and popularity, living

here for over twenty years and spending a fortune on furnishings – an expense that ultimately contributed to his bankruptcy. An inventory made at the time details the huge collection of paintings, sculptures and art treasures he'd amassed, almost all of which was auctioned off after he was declared insolvent and forced to move to a more modest house in the Jordaan in 1658 (see p.85).

The city council bought the Jodenbreestraat house in 1907 and has revamped the premises on several occasions, most recently in 1999. A visit begins in the modern building next door, but you're soon into the string of period rooms that have been returned to something like their appearance when Rembrandt lived here, with the inventory as a guide. The period furniture is enjoyable enough, especially the two box-beds, and the great man's studio is surprisingly large and well-lit, but there are no Rembrandt paintings on display except when there are special exhibitions (for which you can expect to pay extra). The museum also possesses an extensive collection of Rembrandt's etchings and prints as well as several of the original copper plates on which he worked, and these are on display when temporary exhibitions allow. To see more of Rembrandt's paintings, head for the Rijksmuseum (see p.108).

▲ REMBRANTHUIS

### The Holland Experience

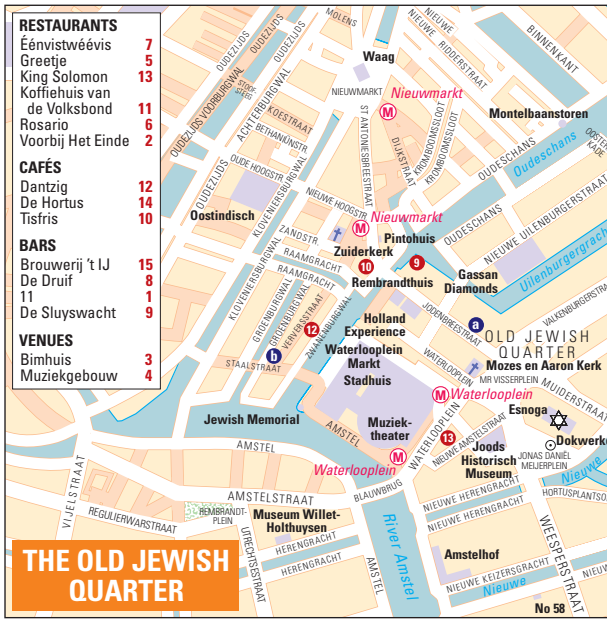
Jodenbreestraat 4 ⓣ020/422 2233, ⓦwww.holland-experience.nl. Daily 10am–6pm. €8.50. The multimedia Holland Experience is a kind of sensory bombardment movie about Holland and Amsterdam, with synchronized smells and a moving floor – not to mention the special 3D glasses. The experience lasts thirty minutes and is especially popular with kids.

### Gassan Diamonds

Nieuwe Uilenburgerstraat 173 ⓣ020/622 5333, ⓦwww.gassandiamonds.nl. Frequent 1hr guided tours daily 9am–5pm. Free; no advance booking required. Gassan Diamonds occupies a large and imposing brick building dating from 1897. Before World War II, many local Jews worked as diamond cutters and polishers, but there's little sign of the industry hereabouts today, this factory being the main exception. Tours include a visit to the cutting and polishing areas as well a gambol round Gassan's diamond jewellery showroom.

### The Stadhuis en Muziektheater

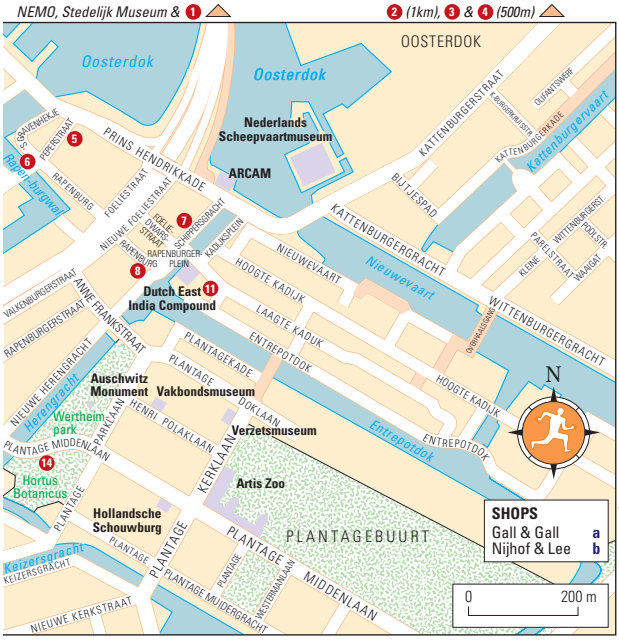
Box office ⓣ020/625 5455, ⓦwww.muziektheater.nl. Jodenbreestraat runs parallel to the Stadhuis en Muziektheater, a sprawling and distinctly underwhelming




modern complex dating from the 1980s and incorporating the city hall and a large auditorium. The Muziektheater offers a varied programme of theatre, dance and ballet as well as opera from the country's first-rate Netherlands Opera (De Nederlandse Opera; ⓦwww.dno.nl), but tickets go very quickly. One of the city's abiding ironies is that the title of the protest campaign aiming to prevent the development in the 1980s – "Stopera" – has passed into common usage to describe the finished item. Inside, amidst all the architectural mediocrity, there are a couple of minor attractions, beginning with the glass columns in the public passageway towards the rear of the complex. These give a salutary lesson on the fragility of the Netherlands: two contain water indicating the sea levels in the Dutch towns of Vlissingen and IJmuiden (below knee level), while another records the levels experienced during the 1953 flood disaster (way above head height). Downstairs a concrete pile shows what is known as "Normal Amsterdam Level" (NAP), originally calculated in 1684 as the average water level in the river IJ and still the basis for measuring altitude above sea level across Europe.

## Waterlooplein

The indeterminate modernity of the Stadhuis complex dominates Waterlooplein, a rectangular parcel of land that was originally swampy marsh. This was the site of the first Jewish Quarter, but by the late nineteenth century it had become an insanitary slum. The slums were cleared in the 1880s and thereafter the open



▲ STADHUSI EN MUZIEKTHEATER, WATERLOOPLEIN

spaces of the Waterlooplein hosted the largest and liveliest market in the city, the place where Jews and Gentiles met to trade. In the war, the Germans used the square to round up their victims, but despite these ugly connotations the Waterlooplein was revived in the 1950s as the site of the city's main **flea market** (Mon–Sat 9am–5pm) and remains so to this day. It's nowhere near as large as it once was, but nonetheless it's still the final resting place of many a pair of yellow corduroy flares and has some wonderful antique and junk stalls to root through – and secondhand vinyl too.

## Mr Visserplein

Just behind the Muziektheater, on the corner of Mr Visserplein, is the **Mozes en Aaron Kerk**, a rather glum Neoclassical

structure built on the site of a clandestine Catholic church in the 1840s. It takes its unusual name from a pair of facade stones bearing effigies of the two prophets that decorated the building it replaced. The square itself, a busy junction for traffic speeding towards the IJ tunnel, takes its name from Mr Visser, President of the Supreme Court of the Netherlands in 1939. He was dismissed the following year when the Germans occupied the country, and became an active member of the Jewish resistance, working for the illegal underground newspaper *Het Parool* ("The Password") and refusing to wear the yellow Star of David. He died in 1942, a few days after publicly – and famously – denouncing all forms of collaboration.

▲ MOZES EN AARON KERK

### The Esnoga

Mr Visserplein Ⓜ www.esnoga.com. Mon–Thurs & Sun 10am–4pm, Fri 10am–3pm; closed Yom Kippur. €6.50.

The brown and bulky brickwork of the Esnoga or Portuguese synagogue was completed in 1675 for the city's Sephardic community. One of Amsterdam's most imposing buildings, it has been barely altered since its construction, its lofty interior following the Sephardic tradition in having the *Hechal* (the Ark of the Covenant) and *tebah* (from where services are led) at opposite ends. Also traditional is the seating, with two sets of wooden benches (for the men) facing each other across the central aisle – the women have separate galleries up above. A set of superb brass chandeliers holds the candles that remain the only source of artificial light. When it was completed, the synagogue was one of the largest in the world, its congregation almost certainly the richest; today, the Sephardic community has dwindled to just 250 families, most of whom live outside the city centre. In one of the outhouses, a video sheds light on the history of the synagogue and Amsterdam's Sephardim; the mystery is why the Germans left it alone – no one knows for sure, but it seems likely that they intended to turn it into a museum once all the Jews had been polished off.

### Jonas Daniel Meijerplein

Jonas Daniel Meijerplein was where, in February 1941, around 400 Jewish men were forcibly loaded up on trucks and taken to their deaths at Mauthausen concentration camp, in reprisal for the killing of a Dutch Nazi during a street fight. The arrests sparked off the February Strike, a general strike in protest against

the Germans' treatment of the Jews. It was organized by the outlawed Communist Party and spearheaded by Amsterdam's transport workers and dockers – a rare demonstration of solidarity with the Jews whose fate was usually accepted without visible protest in all of occupied Europe. The strike was quickly suppressed, but is still commemorated by an annual wreath-laying ceremony on February 25, as well as by Mari Andriessen's statue the *Dokwerker* (Dockworker) standing on the square.

▲ DE DOKWERKER

### Joods Historisch Museum

Nieuwe Amstelstraat 1 ⓣ020/531 0310, ⓦwww.jhm.nl. Daily 11am–5pm; closed Yom Kippur. €6.50. The Joods Historisch Museum – Jewish Historical Museum – is cleverly shoehorned into four adjacent Ashkenazi synagogues that date back to the late seventeenth century. For many years after the war these buildings lay abandoned, but they were finally refurbished – and connected by walkways – in the 1980s to accommodate a Jewish resource centre and exhibition area. A second renovation is currently underway and at present the highlight of a visit is the display on Jewish life exhibited in the main body of the handsome Grote Synagogue. This includes a fine collection of religious silverware, as well as a handful of paintings, plus all manner of antique artefacts illustrating religious customs and practices.

▲ JOODS HISTORISCH MUSEUM

### TunFun

Mr Visserplein 7 ⓣ020/689 4300, ⓦwww.tunfun.nl. Daily 10am–6pm. €7.50, free for adults and under-1s. Large indoor playground near the Portuguese synagogue for children aged 1–12 with lots of equipment to clamber into, under and over, and a host of activities and workshops including football, gymnastics, films and trampolining. Children must be accompanied by an adult but there's a café to sit in if you feel you've already been in one ball park too many.

### The Plantagebuurt

Developed in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Plantagebuurt, with its

comfortable streets spreading to either side of Plantage Middenlaan boulevard, was built as part of a concerted attempt to provide good-quality housing for the city's expanding middle classes. Although it was never as fashionable as the older residential parts of the Grachtengordel, the new district did contain elegant villas and spacious terraces, making it a first suburban port of call for many aspiring Jews. Nowadays, the Plantagebuurt is still one of the more prosperous parts of the city, in a modest sort of way, and boasts two especially enjoyable attractions – the Hortus Botanicus botanical gardens and the Verzetsmuseum (Dutch Resistance Museum).

### Hortus Botanicus

Plantage Middenlaan 2a ⓣ020/625 9021, ⓦwww.hortus-botanicus.nl. Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat & Sun 10am–5pm; closes 4pm in Dec & Jan, open until 9pm in July & Aug. €6.

Amsterdam's Hortus Botanicus botanical gardens were founded in 1682 as medicinal gardens for the use of the city's physicians and apothecaries. Thereafter, many of the city's merchants made a point of bringing back exotic species from the East, the result being the 6000-odd plant species exhibited today. The gardens are divided into several distinct sections, each clearly labelled and its location pinpointed by a map available at the entrance kiosk. There's also a three-climates glasshouse, where the plants are arranged according to their geographical origins, a capacious palm house, an orchid nursery and a butterfly house. It's all very low-key – and none the worse for that – and the gardens make a relaxing break on any tour of central Amsterdam, especially as the café, in the old orangery, serves up tasty sandwiches, coffee and cakes (see p.106).

▲ HORTUS BOTANICUS

### Wertheimpark

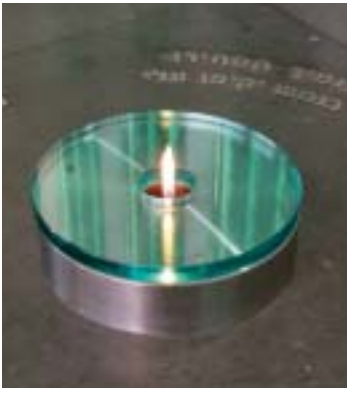
The pocket-sized Wertheimpark, across the road from the Hortus Botanicus, is home to the Auschwitz Monument, a simple affair with symbolically broken mirrors and an inscription that reads *Nooit meer Auschwitz* ("Auschwitz – Never Again"). It was designed by the Dutch writer Jan Wolkers.

### De Hollandsche Schouwburg

Plantage Middenlaan 24. Daily 11am–4pm; closed Yom Kippur. Free.

Another sad relic of the war, De Hollandsche Schouwburg was once a thriving Jewish theatre, but the Germans turned it into the main assembly point for Amsterdam Jews prior to their deportation. Inside, there was no daylight and families were interned in conditions that foreshadowed those of the camps

they would soon be taken to. The building has been refurbished to house a small exhibition on the plight of the city's Jews, but the old auditorium out at the back has been left as an empty, roofless shell. A memorial column of basalt on a Star of David base stands where the stage once was, an intensely mournful monument to suffering of unfathomable proportions.



▲ DE HOLLANDSCHE SCHOUWBURG

### Artis Zoo

Plantage Kerklaan 38–40 ⓣ020/523 3400, ⓦwww.artis.nl. Daily: April to mid-Oct 9am–6pm; mid-Oct to March 9am–5pm. €16; 3- to 9-year-olds €12.50. Opened in 1838, Artis Zoo is the oldest zoo in the country, and is now one of the city's top tourist attractions, though thankfully its layout and refreshing lack of bars and cages mean that it never feels overcrowded. Highlights include an African savanna environment, a seventy-metre-long aviary, aquaria and a South American zone with llamas and the world's largest rodent, the capibara. Feeding times – always popular – include: 11am birds of prey; 11.30am and 3.45pm seals and sea lions; 2pm pelicans; 2.30pm crocodiles (Sun only); 3pm lions and tigers (not Fri); and 3.30pm penguins.

In addition, the on-site Planetarium has five or six shows daily, all in Dutch, though you can pick up a leaflet with an English translation from the desk.

### Vakbondsmuseum

Henri Polaklaan 9 ⓣ020/624 1166, ⓦwww.deburcht-vakbondsmuseum.nl. Tues–Fri 11am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm. €4. The Vakbondsmuseum (Trade Union Museum) holds a small exhibition of documents, cuttings and photos relating to the Dutch labour movement, with a section devoted to Henri Polak, the leader of the Diamond Workers' Union and the man responsible for coordinating the successful campaign for the eight-hour working day.

However, the building is actually rather more interesting than the exhibits. Built by Berlage for the Diamond Workers' Union in 1900, it was designed in a distinctive style that incorporated Romanesque features within an Expressionist framework. The striking, brightly coloured interior develops these themes with a beautiful mixture of stained-glass windows, stone arches, painted brickwork and patterned tiles. From the outside, the building looks like a fortified mansion, hence its old nickname the Rode Burgt ("Red Stronghold"). This design was not just about Berlage's whims. Acting on behalf of the employers, the police – and sometimes armed scabs – were regularly used to break strikes, and the union believed that members could hold out here in

relative safety, which they did on more than one occasion.

### Verzetsmuseum

Plantage Kerklaan 61 ☎020/620 2535, ⓦwww.verzetsmuseum.org. Tues–Fri 10am–5pm, Mon, Sat & Sun noon–5pm. €5.50. The excellent Verzetsmuseum (Dutch Resistance Museum) outlines the development of the Dutch Resistance from the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940 to the country's liberation in 1945. Thoughtfully presented, the central gangway examines the main themes of the occupation, dealing honestly with the fine balance between cooperation and collaboration, while smaller display areas to either side are devoted to different aspects of the resistance, from the Communist-led protest against the rounding-up of Amsterdam's Jews in 1941, to the so-called Milk Strike of 1943, when hundreds of milk producers refused to deliver.

Fascinating old photographs illustrate the English and Dutch text along with a host of original artefacts, from examples of illegal newsletters to signed German death warrants. Apart from their treatment of the Jews, which is detailed here, perhaps the most chilling feature of the occupation was the use of indiscriminate reprisals to terrify the population. The museum has dozens of little metal sheets providing biographical sketches of the members of the Resistance – and it's this mixture of the general and the personal that is its real strength.

### The Oosterdok

Just to the north of the Plantagebuurt lies the Oosterdok, whose network of artificial islands was dredged out of the River IJ to increase Amsterdam's shipping facilities in the seventeenth century. By the 1980s, this mosaic of docks, jetties and islands had become something of a post-industrial eyesore, but since then an ambitious redevelopment programme has turned things around and the area is now dotted with worthwhile attractions, principally the Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum. Easily the most agreeable way of reaching the Oosterdok is via the footbridge at the north end of Plantage Kerklaan – and metres from the Verzetsmuseum – which leads onto Entrepotdok.

### Entrepotdok

Over the footbridge at the end of Plantage Kerklaan lies one of the more interesting of the Oosterdok islands, a slender rectangle whose southern quayside, Entrepotdok, is lined by a long series of nineteenth-century gabled warehouses that were once part of the largest warehouse complex in continental Europe, a gigantic customs-free zone established for

▼ ENTREPOTDOK

▲ SCHEEPVARTMUSEUM

goods in transit. Above the main entrance, each warehouse sports the name of a town or island; goods for onward transportation were stored in the appropriate warehouse until there were enough to fill a boat or barge. The warehouses have been tastefully converted into offices and apartments, a fate that must surely befall the buildings of the central East India Company compound, whose clunky Neoclassical entrance is at the west end of Entrepotdok on Kadijksplein.

### The Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum

Kattenburgerplein 1 ⓣ020/523 2222, ⓦwww.scheepvaartmuseum.nl. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; mid-June to mid-Sept also Mon 10am–5pm. €9. From Kadijksplein, it's the briefest of strolls over to the conspicuous Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum (Netherlands Maritime Museum), which occupies the old arsenal of the Dutch navy, a vast sandstone structure that is underpinned by no less than 18,000 wooden piles driven deep into the river bed at enormous expense in the 1650s.

It's the perfect location for a maritime museum, though to the non-specialist the sheer number of ship models can be a little repetitive. The collection kicks off on the ground floor with temporary exhibitions as well as a flashy gilded barge built for King William I of the Netherlands in 1818. The next floor up, largely devoted to shipping in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is much more diverting, and includes garish ships' figureheads and tillers, examples of early atlases and navigational equipment and finely detailed models of the clippers of the East India Company, then the fastest ships in the world. There are a number of nautical paintings too, the best by Willem van de Velde II (or The Younger; 1633–1707), who was the most successful of the Dutch marine painters of the period. His canvases emphasize the strength and power of the Dutch warship, often depicted in battle or amidst turbulent seas. Outside, moored at the museum jetty, is the most popular exhibit

by a long chalk, a full-scale replica of an East Indiaman, the *Amsterdam*.

### ARCAM

Prins Hendrikkade 600 ⓣ020/620 4878, ⓦwww.arcam.nl. Tues–Sat 1–5pm. Free. Strolling west from the Maritime Museum along the waterfront, you'll soon spy the idiosyncratic hood-shaped structure that has been built to house the Amsterdam Centre for Architecture, ARCAM. It hosts architectural displays, sometimes of a theoretical nature and sometimes forewarning the city of what its architects have in mind, as well as public lectures and discussions.

### NEMO

Prins Hendrikkade ⓣ0900/919 1100 premium line, ⓦwww.e-nemo.nl. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm, plus Mon 10am–5pm during school holidays and in July & Aug. €11.50. Back outside the ARCAM building, the foreground is dominated by a massive elevated hood that rears up above the entrance to the IJ tunnel. A good part of this is occupied by the large and lavish NEMO centre, a (pre-teenage) kids' attraction par excellence, with all sorts of interactive science and technological exhibits spread over six floors and set out under several broad themes.

### Stedelijk Museum

Oosterdokskade 5 ⓣ020/573 2911, ⓦwww.stedelijk.nl. Daily 10am–6pm. €9. The Stedelijk Museum has long been Amsterdam's number-one venue for modern art: its permanent collection is wide-ranging and its temporary exhibitions are usually of international standard. It's been housed in a large old building on Paulus Potterstraat out near the Rijksmuseum (see p.104) for years, but this is being renovated and won't be open again until 2008 if not later. In the meantime, the former postal building on Oosterdokskade near Centraal Station – and just over the footbridge from NEMO – has been pressed into service as the museum's new home. It seems a good choice – the building is a classic 1960s tower block of industrial proportions, and the move has proved so popular that there is a chance the collection may never return to its old premises. Since the move, the museum has focused on cutting-edge temporary exhibitions of modern art – from photography and video through to sculpture and collage – to such an extent that the permanent collection rarely gets much of an outing. The permanent collection includes drawings by Picasso, Matisse and their contemporaries, as well as paintings by Manet, Monet, Bonnard, Ensor, Cézanne, and of course Mondrian, from his early, muddy-coloured abstractions to the cool, boldly coloured rectangular blocks for which he's most famous. The museum also owns a good sample of the work of Kasimir Malevich, his dense attempts at Cubism leading to the dynamism and bold, primary tones of his "Suprematist" paintings, several Marc Chagall paintings, and a number of pictures by American Abstract Expressionists Mark Rothko, Ellsworth Kelly and Barnett Newman, plus works by other American artists – Lichtenstein, Warhol and Jean Dubuffet.

## Shops

### Gall & Gall

Jodenbreestraat 23 ⓣ020/428 7060. Mon–Sat 9am–6pm & Sun noon–5pm.

Has an outstanding range of Dutch *jenevers* (gins) and flavoured spirits as well as a good selection of imported wines. Part of a popular chain.

### Nijhof & Lee

Staalstraat 13a ⓣ020/620 3980, ⓦwww.nijhoflee.nl. Mon noon–6pm, Tues–Fri 9am–6pm & Sat 10am–6pm. One of the city's best art bookshops, it stocks a raft of English-language titles and is good for photography too. Mostly new books, but some rare and antique ones as well. The owners have recently opened up a second store, just along the street at no. 26 – Shop 26 – which specializes in remainder books on art, design and photography (Mon–Sat 11am–6pm & Sun noon–5pm).

## Cafés

### Dantzig

Zwanenburgwal 15. Daily 11am–10pm. Easy-going grand café, right across the water from Waterlooplein. Comfortable chairs, friendly service and a low-key, chic atmosphere. The kitchen is open all day, except for a brief break from 5 to 6pm.

### De Hortus

Plantage Middenlaan 2a. Mon–Fri 9am–4.30pm, Sat & Sun 10am–4.30pm; Dec & Jan closes 3.30pm; July & Aug until 8.30pm. The amenable café in the orangery of the Hortus Botanicus (see p.100) serves a good range of tasty sandwiches and rolls plus the best blueberry cheesecake in the Western world. Unfortunately, you do have to pay to get into the gardens to get to the café.

### Tisfris

St Antoniesbreestraat 142. Daily 9am–7pm. Colourful, New Age-ish split-level café-cum-bar near the Rembrandthuis. Youthful and popular.

## Restaurants

### éénvistwéévis

Schippersgracht 6 ⓣ020/623 2894. Tues–Sun 6–10pm. An uncomplicated fish restaurant serving an interesting selection of seafood, such as oyster and mussel soup for starters and seabass with rosemary and thyme for main courses. Mains at around €20.

### Greetje

Peperstraat 23 ⓣ020/779 7450. Restaurant: Wed–Sun 5–10pm; bar: Wed–Fri & Sun 5pm–1am, Sat 5pm–3am. New kid on the gastronomic block, *Greetje* is a cosy, busy restaurant and bar that serves up Dutch staples with a modern twist. A changing menu reflects the seasons and the favourite dishes of the owners' mother – a native of the southern Netherlands. Superb home-cooking in a great atmosphere.

### King Solomon

Waterlooplein 239 ⓣ020/625 5860. Sun–Thurs noon–10pm, Fri & Sat restricted hours. Approved by the Rabbi of Amsterdam, this restaurant has a straightforward and inexpensive kosher menu.

### Koffiehuis van de Volksbond

Kadijksplein 4 ⓣ020/622 1209. Daily 6–10pm. Formerly a Communist Party café and apparently the place where the local dockworkers used to receive their wages, this is now an Oosterdok neighbourhood café-restaurant – and a good place to try sauerkraut and pork.

### Rosario

Peperstraat 10 ⓣ020/627 0280. Mon–Sat 6–11pm. This very attractive trattoria occupies smart canalside premises and serves up excellent Italian food – especially the ravioli. Mains around €20.

### Voorbij het einde

Sumatrakade 613 ⓣ020/419 1143. Wed–Sat 6.30–11pm. Tram #10 or bus #42 from Centraal Station. One of the best restaurants in Amsterdam, *Voorbij het einde* is tucked away in a high-tech glass box attached to one of the modern buildings on Java island, in the depths of the Oosterdok. The menu is predominantly French, with the odd Dutch flourish, and the service seriously slick. Not much for veggies, but their menus, running from €36 for three courses, are one of the city's best food treats.

▲ BROUWERIJ 'T IJ

## Bars

### Brouwerij 't IJ

De Gooyer Windmill, Funenkade 7. About ten minutes' walk east of the Maritime Museum along Hoogte Kadijk. Wed–Sun 3–8pm. Cosy old-fashioned bar and mini-brewery adjacent to the De Gooyer windmill. Serves up an excellent range of brews, including the thunderously strong Columbus (at 9 percent).

### De Druif

Rapenburgerplein 83. Possibly the city's oldest bar, and certainly one of its more beguiling, this neighbourhood joint pulls in an easy-going crowd.

### 11

Oosterdokskade 3 ⓣ020/625 5999. Mon–Wed & Sun 11am–10pm, Thurs–Sat club nights 11am–4am (kitchen until 10pm). One of the hippest joints in town, this sprawling bar-club-restaurant has bare minimalist-industrial decor inherited from its previous incarnation as the top floor of the old postal building – above the Stedelijk Museum (see p.104). The views out over the city centre are second to none and the journey up in one of the enormous old postal lifts is good fun, but the food doesn't match the setting and really the place is best used as a bar and club.

### De Sluyswacht

Jodenbreestraat 1. This pleasant little bar occupies an old and now solitary gabled house that stands sentry by the lock gates opposite the Rembrandthuis. A smashing spot to nurse a beer on a warm summer's night, gazing down the canal towards the Montelbaanstoren.

▲ DE DRUIF

# Music venues

### Bimhuis

Piet Heinkade 3 ⓣ020/788 2150, ⓦwww.bimhuis.nl. In 2004 the city's premier jazz and improvised music venue moved to its spanking new building next to the Muziekgebouw, beside the River IJ to the east of Centraal Station. The Bimhuis showcases gigs from Dutch and international artists throughout the week, as well as jam sessions and workshops. There's also a bar and restaurant for concert-goers with pleasant views over the river.

### Muziekgebouw

Piet Heinkade 1 ⓣ020/788 2010, ⓦwww.muziekgebouw.nl. Gleamingly new concert hall built as part of the general plan to reinvent the Eastern docklands. Showcases everything from classical through to jazz and rock, and has studios, rehearsal space and convention facilities.

# The Museum Quarter and the Vondelpark

**During the nineteenth century, Amsterdam grew beyond its restraining canals, gobbling up the surrounding countryside with a slew of new, mostly residential suburbs. Museumplein cut through the heart of these new developments, a large triangular open space surrounded by the cream of the city's museums. The largest of these was – and remains – the Rijksmuseum, which occupies a huge late nineteenth-century edifice overlooking the Singelgracht. Possessing an exceptional collection of art and applied art, it is probably best known for its series of paintings from the Dutch Golden Age, particularly those by Rembrandt, although it's in the grip of a huge renovation and only a selection of its collection is currently on display. Close by, the newer Van Gogh Museum, occupying a contrastingly sleek and modern building, boasts the finest assortment of Van Gogh paintings in the world. The adjacent Stedelijk Museum, which has long occupied a grand neo-Renaissance building dating from 1895, is closed for refurbishment. In the meantime some of its outstanding permanent collection of modern art is on display in the old postal building near Centraal Station (see p.104). The Vondelpark, Amsterdam's largest and most elegant green space, whose gently landscaped rectangle of lawns and paths, lakes and streams provides the perfect place for a lazy picnic between museums. The leafy streets around the park, such as PC Hoofstraat, also provide the most upmarket shopping in Amsterdam.**

## Museumplein

Extending south from Stadhouderskade to Van Baerlestraat, Museumplein's wide lawns and gravelled spaces are used for a variety of outdoor activities, from visiting circuses to political demonstrations. There's a war memorial – it's the group of slim steel blocks about three-quarters of the way down the Museumplein on the left-hand side, commemorating the women of the wartime concentration camps, particularly the thousands who died at Ravensbruck. But that aside it's a place to cross to get where you're going.

## The Rijksmuseum

Entrance to the Philips Wing is on Jan Luijkenstraat ☎020/674 7000, ⓦwww.

THE MUSEUM QUARTER & VONDELPARK
RESTAURANTS
Bosboom 1
Dionysos 3
Gent aan de Schinkel 11
Le Garage 13
Loetje 12
Orient 7
CAFÉS & TEAROOMS
't Blauwe Theehuis 6
CoBrA 5
Keyser 9
De Roos 8
Toussaint Café 2
Vertigo 4
BARS
Welling 10
Wildschut 14
SHOPS
Broekmans & van Poppel d
Jacob van Wijngaarden a
Martyrium e
Oilily b
Robert Premsela c
Waterwinkel f
ACCOMMODATION
College C
Filosoof A
Toro B
Vondelkerk
Film Library
Nederlands Filmmuseum
VONDELPARK
Vondelpark
Rijksmuseum
Van Gogh Museum
MUSEUM QUARTER
Stedelijk Museum (closed)
Concert-gebouw
MAX EUWEPLEIN
STADHOUDERSKADE
WETERINGSCHANS
Singelgracht
Boerenwetering
OVERTOOM
VONDELSTRAAT
VONDELKADE
VAN BAERLESTRAAT
PAULUS POTTERSTRAAT
MUSEUMPLEIN
HOBBEMASTR
HOBBEMAKADE
RUYSDAELKADE
HOOFDSTRAAT
WILLEMSPARKWEG
VAN EEGHENSTRAAT
VAN BREESTRAAT
JACOB OBRECHTSTRAAT
CONCERTGEBOUWPLEIN
GABRIEL METSUSTRAAT
MOREELSESTRAAT
LAIRESSESTRAAT
JOHANNES VERHULSTSTRAAT
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PLACES
The Museum Quarter and the Vondelpark

rijksmuseum.nl. Daily 9am–6pm, Fri until 10pm. €10; combined ticket with Van Gogh Museum, including current exhibition, €25. The Rijksmuseum is without question the country's foremost museum, with one of the world's most comprehensive collections of seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, including twenty or so of Rembrandt's works, plus a healthy sample of canvases by Steen, Hals, Vermeer and their leading contemporaries. The museum also owns an extravagant collection of paintings from every other pre-twentieth-century period of Dutch art and has a vast hoard of applied art and sculpture. The bad news is that there's a major renovation going on at the moment and most of the museum is closed, probably until 2009. The exception is the Rijksmuseum's Philips Wing, whose smallish but eclectic "Masterpieces" exhibition, scheduled to last until the rest of the museum is reopened, is devoted to the paintings of Amsterdam's Golden Age. Bear in mind, though, that queues can be long, especially in summer and at weekends, so try to book online first.

It's worth the wait, as the selection on display is superb. There are paintings by Rembrandt's pupils – Ferdinand Bol, Gerard Dou and Gabriel Metsu; several wonderful canvases by Frans Hals, such as his scatological *Merry Drinker*; the cool interiors of Vermeer, Gerard ter Borch and Pieter de Hooch; soft, tonal river scenes by the Haarlem artist Salomon van Ruysdael and by Albert Cuyp; the cool church interiors of Pieter Saenredam; and the popular carousing peasants of Jan Steen. However, it's the Rembrandts that steal the show, especially *The Night Watch* of 1642 – perhaps the most famous and probably the most valuable of all the artist's pictures – plus other key works, like a late *Self-Portrait*, a touching depiction of his cowled son, *Titus*, the arresting *Staalmeesters* and *The Jewish Bride*, one of his very last pictures, finished in 1667.

### The Van Gogh Museum

Ⓣ020/570 5200, Ⓦwww.vangoghmuseum.nl. Daily 10am–6pm, Fri until 10pm. €10, children 13–17 years €2.50; combined ticket with Rijksmuseum, including current exhibition, €25. The Van Gogh Museum, comprising a fabulous collection of the artist's (1853–90) work, is one of Amsterdam's top attractions. The museum occupies two modern buildings, with the kernel of the collection housed in an angular building designed by a leading light of the De Stijl movement, Gerritt Rietveld, and opened to the public in 1973. Well-conceived and beautifully presented, this part of the museum provides an introduction to the man and his art based on paintings that were mostly inherited from Vincent's art-dealer brother Theo.

The **ground floor** of the main museum displays works by some of Van Gogh's well-known friends and contemporaries, many of whom influenced his work – Gauguin, Millet, Anton Mauve, Charles Daubigny and others – while the **first floor** has paintings by the artist himself, displayed chronologically, starting with the dark, sombre works of the early years like *The Potato Eaters* and finishing up with the asylum years at St Rémy and the final, tortured paintings done at Auvers, where Van Gogh lodged for the last three months of his life. It was at Auvers that he painted the frantic *Ears of Wheat* and *Wheatfield with a Reaper*, in which the fields swirl and writhe under weird, light-green, moving

skies. It was a few weeks after completing these last paintings that Van Gogh shot and fatally wounded himself.

The two floors above provide back-up to the main collection. The **second floor** has a library and study area with access to a detailed computerized account of Van Gogh's life and times, plus a number of sketches and a handful of less familiar paintings. The **third floor** features more drawings and sketches from the permanent collection as well as notebooks and letters. This floor also affords space to relevant temporary exhibitions illustrating Van Gogh's artistic influences, or his own influence on other artists.

To the rear of Rietveld's building, and connected by a ground-floor-level escalator, is the ultra-modern curved annexe, an aesthetically controversial structure completed in 1998. Financed by a Japanese insurance company – the same conglomerate who paid $35 million for one of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* canvases in 1987 – this provides temporary exhibition space. Most of these exhibitions focus on one aspect or another of Van Gogh's art and draw heavily on the permanent collection, which means that the paintings displayed in the older building are regularly rotated.

### The Concertgebouw

Concertgebouwplein 2–6 ☎020/671 8345, ⓦwww.concertgebouw.nl. Tours Sun 9.30am, €4, though you have to buy a ticket for the Sun 11am concert too, €13. The Concertgebouw (Concert Hall) is the home of the famed – and much recorded – Koninklijk (Royal) Concertgebouw Orchestra. When the German composer Brahms visited Amsterdam in the 1870s he was scathing about the locals' lack of culture and in particular their lack of an even halfway suitable venue for his music. In the face of such ridicule, a consortium of Amsterdam businessmen got together to fund the construction of a brand-new concert hall and the result was the Concertgebouw, completed in 1888. Since then it has become renowned among musicians and concertgoers for its marvellous acoustics, and after a facelift and the replacement of its crumbling foundations in the early 1990s it is looking and sounding better than ever. The acoustics of the Grote Zaal (Large Hall) are unparalleled, and the smaller Kleine Zaal regularly hosts chamber concerts, often by the resident Borodin Quartet. Prices are very reasonable at €30–50, there are free Wednesday lunchtime concerts from September to May, and in July and August they put on a heavily subsidized series of summer concerts.

Tours last a little over an hour and take in the Grote Zaal, the Kleine Zaal, and the various backroom activities behind all this – control rooms, piano stores, dressing rooms and the like.

▲ VONDELPARK

▲ THE NEDERLANDS FILMMUSEUM

## The Vondelpark

Amsterdam is short of green spaces, which makes the leafy expanses of the Vondelpark, a short stretch from Museumplein and the Concertgebouw, doubly welcome. This is easily the largest and most popular of the city's parks, its network of footpaths used by a healthy slice of the city's population. The park dates back to 1864, when a group of leading Amsterdammers clubbed together to transform the soggy marshland that lay beyond the Leidsepoort into a landscaped park. Named after the popular seventeenth-century poet Joost van den Vondel, the park possesses over 100 species of tree, a wide variety of local and imported plants, and – amongst many incidental features – a bandstand, an excellent rose garden, and a network of ponds and narrow waterways that are home to many sorts of wildfowl. There are other animals too: cows, sheep, hundreds of squirrels, plus a large colony of bright-green parakeets. During the summer the park regularly hosts free concerts and theatrical performances, mostly in its own specially designed open-air theatre.

## The Nederlands Filmmuseum and Library

Vondelpark 3 ☎020/589 1400, ⓦwww.filmmuseum.nl. Housed in a grand nineteenth-century building near the northeastern corner of the Vondelpark, the Nederlands Filmmuseum is really more an arthouse cinema (with two screens) than a museum – a showcase for films of all kinds, most of which are shown in their original language, with subtitles in Dutch or sometimes English. There are several screenings nightly, plus regular matinees, and the programme often follows a prescribed theme or subject. Look out also for news of the free screenings of classic movies in the summer. Behind the museum, just outside the park at Vondelstraat 69, the museum's **film library** (Tues–Fri 1–5pm) has a substantial collection of books, magazines and journals, some in English, though they are for reference only.

# Shops

### Broekmans & van Poppel

Van Baerlestraat 92–94 ⓣ020/675 6979. Mon 10am–6pm, Tues–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–5pm. Specialists in classical music and opera CDs and sheet music, they have perhaps the best selection in the city.

### Martyrium

Van Baerlestraat 170–172 ⓣ020/673 2092. Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Sat 9am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm. Good general bookshop with lots of material in English.

### Jacob van Wijngaarden

Overtoom 97 ⓣ020/612 1901, ⓦwww.jvw.nl. Mon 1–6pm, Tues–Fri 10am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm, Sat 10am–5pm. The city's best travel bookshop, with knowledgeable staff and a huge selection of books, maps, inflatable and illuminated globes and more.

▲ JACOB VAN WIJNGAARDEN

### Oilily

PC Hooftstraat 131–133 ⓣ020/672 3361. Mon 1–6pm, Tues–Sat 10am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm. This marvellous childrens' clothing chain has been dressing the luckiest Dutch kids in colourful, funky – and, let's face it, pretty expensive – outfits since the 1960s, and is still going strong here in its flagship Amsterdam location.

### Robert Premsela

Van Baerlestraat 78 ⓣ020/662 4266. Mon–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat 10am–5.30pm. Great art and architecture book specialist, with lots of stuff in English.

### Waterwinkel

Roelof Hartstraat 10 ⓣ020/675 5932. Mon 1–6pm, Tues–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat 10am–5pm. The only thing on offer here is water – over a hundred different types of bottled mineral water from all over the world. Try a bottle of the deluxe Bling H20 studded in Swarovski crystals; at €45 a pop, it's the haute couture of spring water.

# Cafés and tearooms

### 't Blauwe Theehuis

Vondelpark 5. Daily 10am–10pm. These days this is a slightly shabby tearoom/café/bar in the middle of the Vondelpark, but its building dates from the De Stijl period. Downstairs it's a regular self-service park café; upstairs it's a nice circular bar that hosts DJs on Friday and Saturday nights.

### CoBrA

Hobbemastraat 18. This standalone asymmetric structure behind the Rijksmuseum mainly caters for tourists wanting a convenient place for a drink or quick bite between exhibitions. It's also a popular late-night hangout,

open from 10am until 3am at weekends, otherwise until 9pm.

▲ COBRA CAFE

### Keyzer

Van Baerlestraat 96 ⓣ020/671 1441. Mon–Sat 10am–11pm, Sun 11am–11pm. In operation since 1905, and right next to the Concertgebouw, this café-restaurant exudes a *fin-de-siècle* charm, with ferns, gliding bow-tied waiters and a dark carved-wood interior. It's open all day, and you can come here for dinner, but these days it's best as a venue for lunch or coffee.

### Kinderkookkafé

Vondelpark 6b (Overtoom 325) ⓣ020/625 3257, ⓦwww.kinderkookkafe.nl. A café run entirely by children aged 6- to 12-years, who cook, waiter and wash dishes. The food is simple – pizzas, sandwiches, cakes – and makes for a very rewarding experience. During the week (9am–5pm) the café is open to all, unless closed for a party. Bookings essential at weekends (Sat 3.30pm, 8yrs+; Sun 12.30pm, 6yrs+). Children are expected to bring two guests each, and one must be an adult. Adults €10; 6- to 12-year-olds €5 (€10 if cooking); under-6s €2.50.

### De Roos

PC Hooftstraat 183. Mon–Fri 8.30am–9.30pm, Sat & Sun 8.30am–5.30pm. The downstairs café at this New Age centre on the edge of the Vondelpark is one of the most peaceful spots in the city, selling

▲ KEYZER

a range of drinks and organic snacks and meals. There's also an upstairs bookshop, and any number of courses in yoga and meditation.

### Toussaint Café

Bosboom Toussaintstraat 26. Daily 10am–midnight, Fri & Sat until 1am. This cosy, very friendly café not far from the Vondelpark makes a nice spot for lunch – excellent sandwiches, toasties, *uitsmijters* as well as a tapas-type menu, although service can be slow.

### Vertigo

Vondelpark 3. Daily 10am–1am. Attached to the Filmmuseum, this is a pleasant place to while away a summer afternoon at the tables outside, overlooking the park, or take refuge in winter in the cosy basement interior. Good food, too, at all times of day.

## Restaurants

### Bosboom

Bosboom Toussaintstraat 29 ☎020/683 6854 Wed–Sun 5.30–10.30pm. Owned by the same people who own the *Toussaint Café* across the road, this bright, welcoming restaurant serves food, especially fish, with a Mediterranean slant. Three-course menus are €25.

### Dionysos

Overtoom 176 ☎020/689 4441. Daily 5pm–1am. Inexpensive Greek restaurant just west of the Vondelpark, with the distinct added advantage of serving until 1am.

### Gent aan de Schinkel

Theophile de Bockstraat 1 ☎020/388 2851. Daily 6–10pm. Situated just outside the top end of the Vondelpark, across the pedestrian bridge, this is a lovely corner restaurant on a busy canal, serving Belgian and fusion cuisine and a huge range of bottled Belgian beers to enjoy on their summer terrace.

### Le Garage

Ruysdaelstraat 54 ☎020/679 7176. Daily 6–11pm, Mon–Fri also noon–2pm. This elegant restaurant, with an eclectic French and Italian menu, is popular with a media crowd, since it's run by a well-known Dutch TV cook. Call to reserve a week ahead and dress to impress. Two-course menus are around €40, three courses for €50.

### Loetje

Joh Vermeerstraat 52 ☎020/662 8173. Mon–Fri 11am–10pm, Sat evening only. Excellent steaks, fries and salads are the thing at this eetcafé. The service can be touch-and-go, but the food is great, and fairly inexpensive.

### Orient

Van Baerlestraat 21 ☎020/673 4958. Daily 5–10pm. Moderately priced Indonesian restaurant. Excellently prepared dishes, with a wide range to choose from; vegetarians are very well taken care of, and the service is generally good. Expect to pay around €22 for a *rijsttafel*.

## Bars

### Welling

J.W. Brouwersstraat 32. Situated right behind the Concertgebouw, this traditional haunt of gloomy Amsterdam intellectuals is usually packed solid with performers and visitors alike before and after evening performances.

### Wildschut

Roelof Hartplein 1. Not far from the Concertgebouw, this bar is famous for its Art Deco trimmings, and its congenial large interior and outside seating in summer. Much the nicest place to drink in the area, and with a decent menu too.

▲ WILDSCHUT

# The outer districts

**Amsterdam is a small city, and the majority of its residential outer districts are easily reached from the city centre. The south holds most of interest, kicking off with the raucous De Pijp quarter, home to the Heineken Experience, sited in the company's old brewery, and the 1930s architecture of the Nieuw Zuid (New South), which also contains the enjoyable woodland area of the Amsterdamse Bos. As for the other districts, you'll find a good deal less reason to make the effort, although the Tropenmuseum, a short walk from the Muiderpoort gate in Amsterdam East, is worth a special journey, and further south the Amsterdam ArenA, home to Ajax, is a must-see for football fans.**

## De Pijp

Across Boerenwetering, the canal to the east of the Rijksmuseum and Museumplein (see p.108), lies the busy heart of the Oud Zuid (Old South) – the district known as De Pijp ("The Pipe"), Amsterdam's first real suburb. New development beyond the Singelgracht began around 1870, but after laying down the street plans, the city council left the actual house-building to private developers. They made the most of the arrangement and constructed long rows of cheaply built and largely featureless five- and six-storey buildings, and it is these that still dominate the area today. The district's name comes from the characteristically narrow terraced streets running between long, sombre canyons of brick tenements: the apartments here were said to resemble pipe-drawers, since each had a tiny street frontage but extended deep into the building. De Pijp remains one of the city's more closely knit communities, and is home to a large proportion of new immigrants – Surinamese, Moroccan, Turkish and Asian.

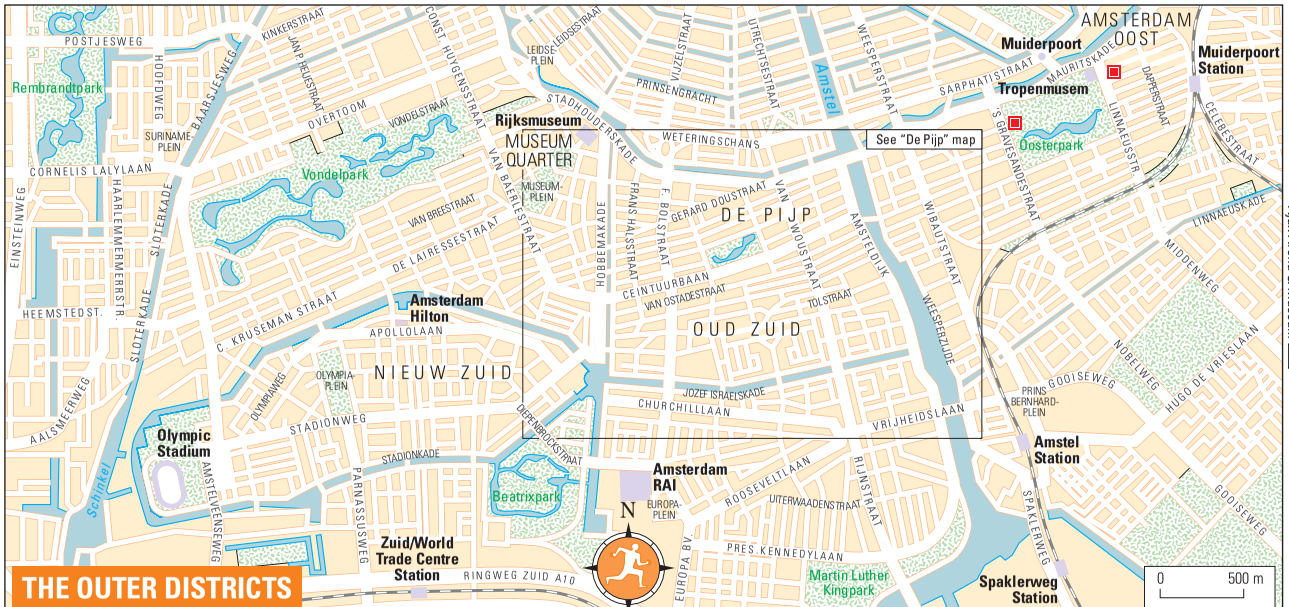
Trams #16 and #24, beginning at Centraal Station, travel along the northern part of De Pijp's main drag, Ferdinand Bolstraat, as far as Albert Cuypstraat.

▲ DE PIJP STREET SCENE

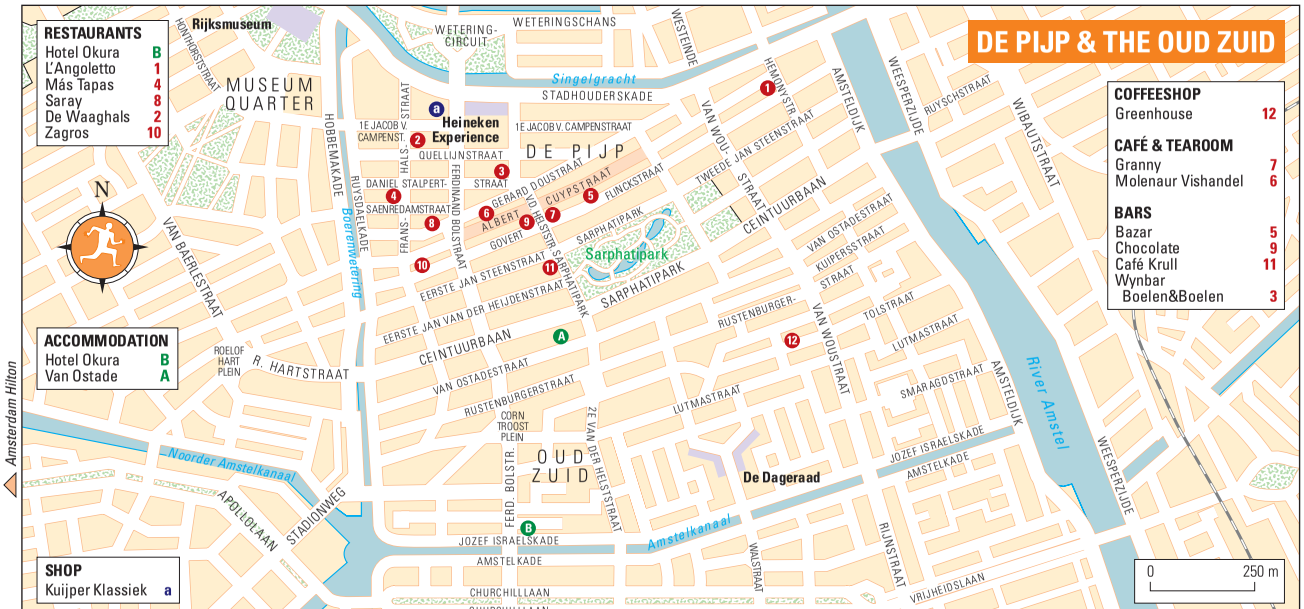
### The Heineken Experience

Stadhouderskade 78. Tram #16, #24 or #25 from CS. ☎020/523 9666, ⓦwww.heinekenexperience.com. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. €10.

On the northern edge of De Pijp, the former Heineken


THE OUTER DISTRICTS
POSTJESWEG
HOOFDWEG
Rembrandtpark
KINKERSTRAAT
JAN PIETERSZOONSTRAAT
RAARSJESWEG
SURINAME PLEIN
OVERTOOM
VONDELSTRAAT
CONST. HUYGENSTRAAT
Rijksmuseum
MUSEUM QUARTER
MUSEUM PLEIN
LEIDSE PLEIN
LEIDSESTRAAT
VIJZELSTRAAT
UTRECHTSESTRAAT
PRINSENGRACHT
Amstel
WEESPERSTRAAT
STADHOUDERSKADE
WETERINGSCHANS
See "De Pijp" map
AMSTERDAM OOST
Muiderpoort
Muiderpoort Station
SARPHATISTRAAT
MAURITSKADE
Tropenmusem
DAPPERSTRAAT
CELEBESTRAAT
LINNAEUSSTR.
Oosterpark
S. GRAFESANDESTRAAT
LINNAEUSKADE
CORNELIS LALYLAAN
HAARLEMMERMEERSTR.
EINSTEINWEG
SLOTERKADE
Vondelpark
VAN BREESTRAAT
DE LAIRESSESTRAAT
VAN BAERLESTRAAT
FRANS HALSSTRAAT
HOBBEMAKADE
F. BOLSTRAAT
GERARD DOUSTRAAT
VAN WOUSTRAAT
DE PIJP
AMSTELDIJK
WIBAUTSTRAAT
WESERZIJDE
MIDDENWEG
HEEMSTEDST.
C. KRUSEMAN STRAAT
Amsterdam Hilton
APOLLOLAAN
CEINTUURBAAN
VAN OSTADESTRAAT
TOLSTRAAT
OUD ZUID
NOBELWEG
HUGO DE VRIESLAAN
OLYMPIAWEG
OLYMPIA PLEIN
NIEUW ZUID
JOZEF ISRAELSKADE
CHURCHILLLAAN
PRINS BERNHARD-PLEIN
GOOISEWEG
VRIJHEIDSLAAN
AALSMEERWEG
Olympic Stadium
STADIONWEG
STADIONKADE
DIEMERBROCKSTRAAT
Amstel Station
Schinkel
AMSTELVEENSEWEG
PARNASSUSWEG
Beatrixpark
Amsterdam RAI
EUROPA-PLEIN
ROOSEVELTLAAN
UITERWAADENSTRAAT
RIJNSTRAAT
SPAKLERWEG
GOOISEWEG
EUROPA BV
PRES. KENNEDYLAAN
Martin Luther Kingpark
Spaklerweg Station
Zuid/World Trade Centre Station
RINGWEG ZUID A10
0
500 m
CoBrA Museum
Amsterdamse BOS
Ajax Arena & Museum

# DE PIJP & THE OUD ZUID



brewery, a whopping modern building beside the Singelgracht canal, now holds the Heineken Experience. The brewery was Heineken's headquarters from 1864 to 1988, when the company was restructured and brewing was moved to a more efficient location out of town. Since then, Heineken has developed the site as a tourist attraction with lots of gimmicky but fun attractions such as virtual reality tours and displays on the history of Heineken from advertising campaigns to beer-making. The old brewing facilities with its vast copper vats are included on the tour, but for many the main draw is the free beer you get to quaff at the end in the bar – three drinks, and a souvenir glass, which isn't bad value.

▲ THE HEINEKEN EXPERIENCE

### Albert Cuypstraat market

Ferdinand Bolstraat, running north–south, is De Pijp's main street, but the long, slim east–west thoroughfare of Albert Cuypstraat is its heart. The general **market** (daily except Fri 10am–5pm) held here – which stretches for over a kilometre between Ferdinand Bolstraat and Van Woustraat – is the largest in the city, with a huge array of stalls selling everything from cut-price carrots and raw-herring sandwiches to saucepans and Day-Glo thongs. Check out, too, the ethnic shops that flank the market on each side, and the Indian and Surinamese restaurants down the side streets – they're often cheaper than their equivalents in the city centre.

### The Sarphatipark

Tram #25. Leafy Sarphatipark provides a welcome splash of greenery amongst the surrounding brick and concrete. The park, complete with footpaths and a sinewy lake, was laid out before the construction of De Pijp got underway, and was initially intended as a place for the bourgeoisie to take a picnic.

### The Nieuw Zuid

Southwest of De Pijp, the Nieuw Zuid (New South) was the first properly planned extension to the city since the concentric canals of the seventeenth century. The Dutch architect Hendrik Petrus Berlage was responsible for the overall plan, but much of the implementation passed to a pair of prominent architects of the Amsterdam School, Michael de Klerk and Piet Kramer, and it's the playful architectural vision of these two – turrets and bulging windows, sloping roofs and frilly balustrades – that you see in the buildings of the Nieuw Zuid today, the best example of which is the housing estate, north of Amstel canal, called **De Dageraad**. As a result, the Nieuw Zuid has become one of Amsterdam's most sought-after addresses. Apollolaan and, a little way to the east, Churchilllaan are especially

favoured and home to some of the city's most sumptuous properties – huge idiosyncratic mansions set back from the street behind trees and generous gardens. Locals pop to the shops on Beethovenstraat, the main drag running south right through the district, and stroll through the languid greenery of the Beatrixpark, or, slightly further out, the Amsterdamse Bos, but there's not much to attract the visitor who isn't a student of modern architecture.

### The Amsterdam Hilton

Apollolaan 138. One historic footnote that might entice you this far south is the *Amsterdam Hilton* where John Lennon and Yoko Ono staged their famous week-long "Bed-In" for peace in 1969. Part celebrity farce, part skilful publicity stunt, the couple's anti-war proclamations were certainly heard far and wide, but in Britain the press focused on the supposed evil influence of Yoko on John, which satisfied at least three subtexts – racism, sexism and anti-Americanism.

### The Amsterdamse Bos

Main entrance near the visitor centre at the junction of Amstelveenseweg and Van Nijenrodeweg, 3km south of the west end of the Vondelpark (see p.112). Buses #170 and #172 from Centraal Station and the Leidseplein, ply Amstelveenseweg; it's about 350m from the nearest bus stop (Van Nijenrodeweg) to the east end of Bosbaan. ⓦ www.amsterdamsebos.nl. With ten square kilometres of wooded parkland, the Amsterdamse Bos (Amsterdam Forest), to the southwest of the Nieuw Zuid, is the city's largest open space. Planted during the 1930s, the park was a large-scale attempt to provide gainful work for the city's unemployed. Originally a bleak area of flat and marshy fields, it combines a rural feel with that of a well-tended city park – and thus the "forest" tag is something of a misnomer. In the north of the Bos, the **Bosbaan** is a kilometre-long dead-straight canal, popular for boating and swimming, and there are children's playgrounds and spaces for various sports, including ice skating. There's also a goat farm (March to mid-Nov daily except Tues 10am–5pm; ⓣ020/645 5034) and a nature reserve just to the south with bison and sheep. Canoes and pedaloes can be rented west of the Bosbaan at **Grote Vijver** ("big pond"; daily April–Oct 10.30am–6pm; ⓣ020/645 7831), or you can simply walk or jog your way around a choice of six clearly marked trails. The new **Bezoekerscentrum het**

▲ BEZOEKERSCENTRUM HET BOSMUSEUM

**Bosmuseum** (daily noon–5pm; free; ⓣ020/545 6100), also beside the Bosbaan, at the main entrance to the Bos at Bosbaanweg 5, is a visitor information centre that provides maps and information on the park's facilities, as well as a kids' corner, and an exhibition on its history and function. Further information and a map can be found at *Boerderij Meerzicht*, a first-rate pancake house located to the east of the Bosbaan at Koenenkade 56 (mid-Feb to Oct Tues–Sun 11am–7pm; Nov–March Fri, Sat & Sun only; ⓣ020/679 2744).

To the east end of Bosbaan you can rent a bike (April–Oct daily 10am–6pm; ⓣ020/644 5473) – much the best way of getting around.

### CoBrA Museum

Sandbergplein 13, Amstelveen. Bus #172 or tram #5 from CS to Amstelveen Binnehof and walk west 10min. ⓣ020/547 5050, ⓦwww.cobra-museum.nl. Tues–Sun 11am–5pm. €7. A great modern building, with soothing white walls flanked with glass, houses works from the influential CoBrA movement, which was founded in 1948. The leading lights – Appel, Constant and Corneille – rejected the idea of placing restrictions in art, and their first exhibition, displaying large canvases with bold lines and childlike paintings, caused controversy. Upstairs hosts decent temporary exhibitions, and there's a lovely bright café overlooking one of Appel's large-scale sculptures. Well worth the trip out.

### The Muiderpoort

Plantage Middenlaan. Amsterdam East begins with Amsterdam's old eastern gate, the Muiderpoort, a Neoclassical affair complete with a flashy cupola and grandiosely carved pediment. Napoleon staged a triumphal entry into the city through here in 1811, but his imperial pleasure was tempered by his half-starved troops, who could barely be restrained from helping themselves in a city of (what was to them) amazing luxury.

### The Tropenmuseum

Linnaeusstraat 2. Tram #9 from CS. ⓣ020/568 8215, ⓦwww.tropenmuseum.nl. Daily 10am–5pm. €7.50; 6- to 17-year-olds €4. Despite its general lack of appeal, the East district does have one obvious attraction – the Tropenmuseum, perched on the corner of another of the city's municipal green spaces, the Oosterpark. With its cavernous central hall and three floors of gallery space, this museum has room to focus on themes such as the world's cultural and historical influences, and impresses with its applied art.

The first floor is dedicated to Dutch colonialism, focusing on Indonesia and the Pacific, with

▲ MUIDERPOORT

▲ THE TROPENMUSEUM

many treasures on show for the first time after having been hidden away for years. Amongst the artefacts, there are Javanese stone friezes, elaborate carved wooden boats from New Guinea, life-size figures dressed in colonial dress and, perhaps strangest of all, ritual ancestor "Bis poles" cut from giant New Guinea mangroves. The collection is imaginatively presented in a variety of media – slides, DVDs and sound recordings – and there are also creative and engaging displays devoted to such subjects as music-making and puppetry, as well as traditional storytelling. In addition, there are reconstructions, down to sounds and smells, of typical streets from different countries, such as a Jamaican café or a Surinamese logger's hut, which aim to provide candid expositions on problems – both urban and rural – which face the world today.

While you're here, be sure to look in on the bookshop, which has a good selection of titles on the developing world, and try the inexpensive **restaurant**, the *Ekeko*, which serves tropical snacks and lunches, including popular national dishes from the featured countries. Downstairs, the **Tropen Instituut Theater** specializes in Third World cinema, music and dance.

### Amsterdam ArenA

Arena Boulevard 1. Metro to Strandvliet or ArenA ⓣ020/311 1336, ⓦwww.amsterdamarena.nl. April–Sept daily 10am–6pm; Oct–March Mon–Sat & last Sun of the month 10am–5pm. Museum and stadium tour €8.50, museum only €3.50. It's well-worth the fifteen-minute metro ride to visit the Ajax Museum and take a tour of the stadium at the same time. The museum pays homage to Cruyff and Van Basten and displays paraphernalia from its European campaigns. The main draw, however, is an hour-long, behind-the-scenes tour where you go into the press room where you can snap yourself in front of the sponsors logo, see arguably the best view from the security box, and also allows you onto a strip of the hallowed turf itself.

## Shops

### Kuijper Klassiek

Ferdinand Bolstraat 6 ⓣ020/679 4634. Mon 1–6pm, Tues–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat 10am–5pm. Classical music and Royal Concertgebouw recordings on CD and DVD.

## Coffeeshops

### Greenhouse

Tolstraat 91. Tram #4. Daily 9am–1am. Consistently sweeps the boards at the annual Cannabis Cup, with medals for its dope as well as "Best Coffeeshop" – these guys are extremely knowledgeable in their

"grassy" field. Tolstraat is down to the south, but worth the trek: if you're only buying once, buy here. Also branches nearer to the centre at Waterlooplein 345 and O.Z. Voorburgwal 191.

# Cafés and tearooms

### Granny

1e van der Helststraat 45. Mon–Sat 9am–6pm. Just off the Albert Cuypstraat market, adorned with low-hanging beaded lampshades and faded photos of canal scenes, this place is known for its terrific *appelgebak*, had with *pana montata* for that full-on homely experience.

### Molenaur Vishandel

Albert Cuypstraat 93. Mon–Sat 9am–5pm. What better way to round off your visit to the market than to sample the delights of this excellent – and typical – Dutch fish stall. If you're not brave enough for the raw herring there are cooked offerings too, such as calamari.

# Restaurants

### Hotel Okura

Ferdinand Bolstraat 333 ⓣ020/678 7111. Daily from 6.30pm. This five-star hotel has two Michelin-starred restaurants – the sushi restaurant *Yamazato*, with over fifty specialities, and the French *Ciel Bleu* situated on the 23rd floor, and offering amazing views of the city – plus the renowned grill-plate restaurant *Teppanyaki Sazanka*, which makes it one of the finest places to dine in the city. Reckon on at least €50–65 per person. Advance bookings essential.

### L'Angoletto

Hemonystraat 2 ⓣ020/676 4182. Daily except Sat from 6pm. Just about everyone's favourite Italian, inexpensive and always packed, with long wooden tables and benches that create a very sociable atmosphere. Not everything they serve is shown on the menu, so keep an eye on the glass showcase in front of the kitchen for any specials. No bookings, so just turn up and hope for the best.

### Más Tapas

Saenredamstraat 37 ⓣ020/664 0066. Daily 4pm–midnight. This small, Moorish-style restaurant with mosaic tiles everywhere serves inexpensive tapas (€3.50) and an interesting variety of main dishes (€7.50–9.50), and has outside seating on the leafy yet happening intersection.

### Saray

Gerard Doustraat 33 ⓣ020/671 9216. Daily from 5pm. Excellent Turkish eatery down in the De Pijp neighbourhood. Its dark wood, candle-lit interior and living room ambience bestow an inviting backdrop for a leisurely dinner. It's cheap too, with main courses from €10–13 and mixed mezze €6.50 per person.

### De Waaghals

Frans Halsstraat 29 ⓣ020/679 9609. Tues–Sun 5–9.30pm. Well-prepared organic dishes in this cooperative-run restaurant near the Albert Cuyp. This place gets busy early so book ahead to be sure of a table. The menu changes twice a month, and though food takes a while to prepare, the rewards are delicious and generously portioned. Mains around €13. No credit cards.

### Zagros

Albert Cuypstraat 50 ⓣ020/670 0461. Daily from 4pm. Popular no-frills Kurdish restaurant run by four brothers. Serves inexpensive traditional dishes from around €3 for starters and €11 for marinated lamb and chicken mains. Fish and vegetarian options available too.

## Bars

### Bazar

Albert Cuypstraat 182. This cavernous converted church is usually buzzing with activity long after the market traders have packed up. A lively place to share a bottle of wine or eat dinner; choose from the Middle Eastern and South African influenced menu.

### Chocolate

1e van der Helststraat 62a. Cool, disco-inspired café-bar that's open for tasty food or cocktails any time of the day. Perch at the bar on leather stools or lounge in the cosy room out the back. It's a shame that service can be somewhat lackadaisical.

### Café Krull

Sarphatipark 2. On the corner of 1e van der Helststraat, a few metres from the Albert Cuyp, this is an atmospheric and lively place. Drinks and snacks all day long.

### East of Eden

Linnaeusstraat 11. A wonderfully relaxed little place right near the Tropenmuseum. Appealing combination of high-ceilinged splendour and gently waving palm trees, with James Dean thrown in to boot. A good way to spend a sunny afternoon.

### Wynbar Boelen&Boelen

1e van der Helststraat 50. Tasteful wine bar close to Albert Cuypstraat market with a huge selection of wines from around the world, many available by the glass. A heated terrace provides alfresco eating even in the cooler months, and the French-inspired menu offers seafood delights such as a half-dozen oysters for around €11.

## Clubs

### Arena

's-Gravensandestraat 51. Tram #7 from CS. ⓣ020/850 2400, ⓦwww.hotelarena.nl. Fri & Sat 10pm–4am. Hip club set in a restored chapel adjoining a hotel that used to be an orphanage and an asylum. Open Fridays and Saturdays, with occasional Salsa nights and special parties hosted on a Sunday. International DJs sometimes drop by – and that's when you can expect the entrance fee to jump from around €11 to €20.

▲ EAST OF EDEN

# Day-trips from Amsterdam

**Amsterdammers may well tell you that there's nothing remotely worth seeing outside their own city, but that's far from the truth. The fast and efficient Dutch railway network puts a whole swathe of the Netherlands within easy reach, including all of the Randstad, a sprawling conurbation that stretches south and east of Amsterdam and encompasses the country's other big cities, The Hague, Utrecht and Rotterdam. Close to Amsterdam, amidst this urban pile-up, is one particularly charming town, Haarlem, which is also home to the outstanding Frans Hals Museum and near the showcase of the country's flower growers, the Keukenhof Gardens. To the north of Amsterdam, the most obvious targets are the old seaports bordering the freshwater IJsselmeer and Markermeer lakes, formerly – before the enclosing dykes were put in – the choppy and notoriously unpredictable saltwater Zuider Zee. No trains venture out along this coast, but it's an easy bus ride from Amsterdam to the most interesting of them, the former fishing village of Marken, as well as to the beguiling one-time shipbuilding centre of Edam. Edam is, of course, famous for its cheese, but its open-air cheese market is not a patch on that of Alkmaar, an amiable small town forty minutes by train north from Amsterdam.**

## Haarlem and the Frans Hals Museum

An easy fifteen-minute train journey (4 hourly) from Amsterdam's Centraal Station, Haarlem has a very different pace and feel from its big-city neighbour. Once a flourishing cloth-making centre, the town avoided the worst excesses of industrialization and nowadays it's an easily

▲ FRANS HALS MUSEUM

absorbed town of around 15,000 souls with an attractive centre studded with fine old buildings. The real draw, however, is the outstanding **Frans Hals Museum**, located in the almshouse where the artist spent his last, and for some his most brilliant, years. Located at Groot Heiligland 62 (Tues–Sat 11am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm; €7; ⓣ023/511 57 75, ⓦ www.franshalsmuseum.nl), the museum is a five-minute stroll south from the main square, the Grote Markt – take pedestrianized Warmoesstraat and then Schagchelstraat and keep straight ahead.

Chief among the paintings by Hals is the set of "Civic Guard" portraits with which he made his name. Displayed together, these make a powerful impression – alongside the artist's later, darker works, the most notable of which are the twin *Regents* and *Regentesses of the Oudemannenhuis*. There are those who claim Hals had lost his touch by the time he

painted these later pictures, yet the sinister, almost ghostly power of the regents facing each other across the room suggests quite the opposite. And Van Gogh's remark that "Frans Hals had no fewer than 27 blacks" suddenly makes perfect sense.

### The Keukenhof Gardens

Stationsweg 166, Lisse ⓣ025/2465 555, ⓦwww.keukenhof.com. Late March to late May daily 8am–7.30pm. €12.50. The pancake-flat fields extending south from Haarlem towards Leiden are the heart of the Dutch **bulbfields**, whose bulbs and blooms support a billion-dollar industry and some ten-thousand growers, as well as attracting tourists in their droves. The small town of Lisse, halfway between Leiden and Haarlem, is home to the Keukenhof Gardens, the largest flower gardens in the world. Literally the "kitchen garden", its site is the former estate of a fifteenth-century countess, who used to grow herbs and vegetables for her dining table. Some seven million flowers are on show for their full flowering period, complemented, in case of especially harsh winters, by 5000 square metres of glasshouses holding indoor displays. You could easily spend a whole day here, swooning among the sheer abundance of it all, but to get the best of it you need to come early, before the tour buses pack the place. There are several restaurants in the 28 hectares of grounds, and well-marked paths take you all the way through the gardens, which specialize in daffodils, hyacinths and tulips.

To get to the Keukenhof by public transport from Amsterdam (or Haarlem), take the train to Leiden (every 20min) and then catch bus #54 (every 30min) from the adjacent bus station.

### Marken

Stuck out in the freshwater Markermeer, the tiny little island of Marken was pretty much a closed community, supported by a small fishing industry, until its road connection to the mainland was completed in 1957. Nowadays, the fishing has all but disappeared, though the island – or rather its one and only village, Marken – does attract hundreds of day-trippers drawn here by the picturesque charm of its immaculately maintained old wooden houses, mostly painted in deep green with white trimmings and clustered on top of artificial mounds first raised to protect the islanders from the sea. There are two main parts to the village, beginning with **Havenbuurt**, behind the harbour, where the waterfront is dotted with snack bars and souvenir shops, often staffed by locals in traditional costume. The other part – **Kerkbuurt** – centred

▲ MARKEN WOODEN HOUSE

on the church, is a good deal quieter, its narrow lanes lined by ancient dwellings and one-time eel-smoking houses. One or two of the houses are open to visitors, proclaiming themselves to be typical of Marken, and here and there you'll find poignant reminders of just how hard life used to be in communities as isolated as this.

Marken is accessible direct from Amsterdam on bus #111, departing from outside Centraal Station (every 30min; 35min). The bus drops passengers beside the car park on the edge of Marken village, from where it's a five-minute walk to the centre.

## Edam

Considering the international fame of the rubbery-red balls of cheese that carry its name, you might expect the village of Edam, just 12km or so up along the coast from Marken, to be jam-packed with tourists. In fact, Edam usually lacks the crowds of its island neighbour and remains a delightful, good-looking and prosperous little town of neat brick houses, swing bridges and slender canals – so pretty that the village was once, according to local legend, a favourite haunt of the Zuider Zee's pleasure-seeking mermaids. Nowadays, the one real crowd puller is Edam's **cheese market** held every Wednesday morning from July to late August on the Kaasmarkt (10.30am–12.30pm), though "Edam" is actually the name of a type of cheese and not its place of origin, and the red balls are produced all over the place, not necessarily even in Holland.

Leaving Amsterdam every half hour from outside Centraal Station, bus #110 takes forty minutes to reach Edam. Edam's bus station is on the southwest edge of town, on Singelweg, a five-minute walk from the main square, Damplein. There are no signs, but aim for the easily spotted Speeltoren tower: cross the distinctive swing bridge, turn right and follow Lingerzijde as it zigzags left and right. From the Speeltoren, it's a few metres east to the Damplein, where the VVV issues town maps and has details of boat trips both along the local canals and out into the Markermeer. Bike rental is available at Ronald Schot, in the town centre at Grote Kerkstraat 7 (Tues–Fri 8.30am–6pm, Sat 8.30am–4pm; ☎029/937 2155, ⓦwww.ronaldschot.nl); day rental costs €6.50.

▲ EDAM

## Alkmaar cheese market

Mid-April to mid-Sept Fri 10am–noon.

Forty minutes north from Amsterdam by train, the little town of Alkmaar was founded in the tenth century in the middle of a marsh; its name is taken from the auk, a diving bird which once hung around here

▲ ALKMAAR CHEESE MARKET

in numbers, as in *alkeen meer*, or auk lake. The town's pleasant, partially canalized centre is still surrounded by its moat, and holds a cluster of impressive medieval buildings, but Alkmaar is perhaps best known for its much-touted **cheese market**, an ancient affair that these days ranks as one of the most extravagant tourist spectacles in Holland. Cheese has been sold on the main square – the Waagplein – since the 1300s, and although it's no longer a serious commercial concern, the market remains popular and continues to draw the crowds. If you want a good view be sure to get here early, as by opening time visitors are already thick on the ground. The ceremony starts with the buyers sniffing, crumbling, and finally tasting each cheese, followed by intensive bartering. Once a deal has been concluded, the cheeses – golden discs of Gouda mainly, laid out in rows and piles on the square – are borne away on ornamental carriers for weighing. The porters, who bear the carriers, wear white trousers and shirt plus a black hat whose coloured bands – green, blue, red or yellow – represent the four companies that comprise the cheese porters' guild. Payment for the cheeses, tradition has it, takes place in the cafés around the square.

From Alkmaar's train and bus station, it's about ten minutes' walk to the centre of town: keep straight outside the station along Spoorstraat, take the first right down Snaarmanslaan and then left at busy Geesterweg, which leads over the old city moat to St Laurenskerk. From the church, it's another five minutes' walk east along Langestraat to the VVV (tourist office), housed in the Waag on Waagplein.

## Restaurants

### Het Hof van Alkmaar

Hof van Sonoy 1, Alkmaar ☎072/512 1222. Mon noon–9pm, Tues–Sat 10am–9.30pm, Sun noon–9.30pm.

During the day, this café-cum-restaurant offers inexpensive sandwiches, snacks and pancakes, and at night they serve up a tasty mix of French and Dutch cuisine – it's the best place in town. It occupies delightful old premises in a miniature square just off Nieuwesloot.

### Restaurant La Plume

Lange Veerstraat 1, Haarlem
☎023/531 3202. Daily 5.30–11pm.
A popular and very affordable restaurant with a tasty range of traditional Dutch dishes. Mains €14–20.

▲ CAFE 1900

## Cafés and bars

### Café 1900

Barteljorisstraat 10, Haarlem. Mon & Sun 11am–midnight, Tues–Sat 9am–3am. With an attractive early twentieth-century interior, this has long been a popular café-bar, serving drinks and light meals.

### Proeflokaal 't Apothekertje

Waagplein, Alkmaar.
An old-style bar, open till 2am, with an attractive antique-cluttered interior and a laidback atmosphere.

# Accommodation

# Hotels

Despite a slew of new hotels, from chic designer places through to chain high-rises, hotel accommodation in Amsterdam can still be difficult to find, and is often a major expense, especially at peak times of the year – July and August, Easter and Christmas. Such is the popularity of Amsterdam as a short-break destination that you'd be well advised to make an advance reservation at any time of the year. In spite of this, most hotels only charge the full quoted rates at the very busiest times, which means that you'll often pay less than the peak-season prices quoted in this book; it's certainly always worth asking if there is any discount available, especially on week nights when a lot of hotels routinely charge less anyway.

You can obviously book direct, or you can compare prices and availability through the **Netherlands Reservations Centre** (⓪0031/299 689 144, ⓕ689 154, ⓦwww.hotelres.nl), the reservation department of the **Amsterdam Tourism Board** (⓪0031/20 551 2525, ⓕ201 8850, ⓦwww.amsterdamtourist.nl), or ⓦwww.bookings.nl. Once you've arrived, the city's VVV tourist offices (see p.150) will make on-the-spot hotel reservations on your behalf for a small fee, but during peak periods and weekends they get extremely busy with long and time-consuming queues. The good news is that the city's compactness means that you'll almost inevitably end up somewhere central.

As regards **prices**, the least expensive hotels charge from around €60 for a double room with shared facilities, €80–100 for the cheapest en-suite double. However, don't expect too much in the way of creature comforts at these sort of prices – you really hit the comfort zone at about €120, though of course you can pay much, much more at the city's deluxe hotels. **Breakfast** – simple bread, jam or eggs at the budget hotels, banquets at the top end of the market – is normally included in the price as is tax (five percent), but as ever the more expensive hotels slap both on top of quoted prices.

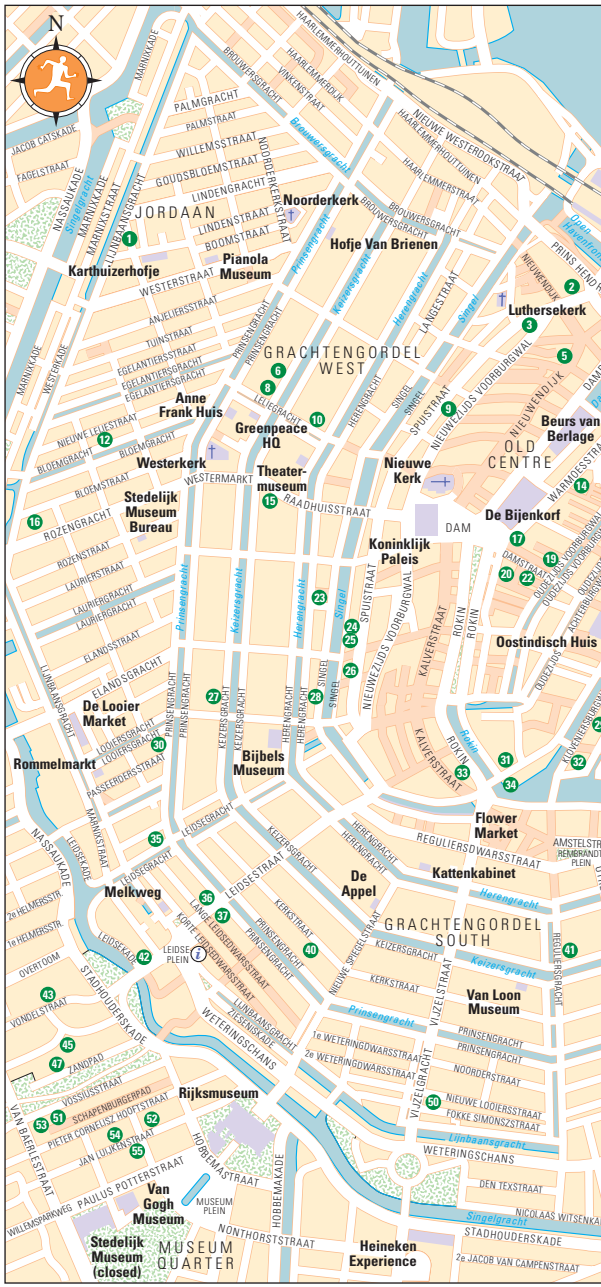
All accommodation is marked on the map on pp.136–137, unless otherwise indicated.

## The Old Centre

**Bellevue** **Martelaarsgracht 10 ⓪020/707 4500, ⓦwww.bellevuehotel.nl.** The rooms are newly renovated in a modern style and the location couldn't be more convenient, two minutes' from Centraal Station. Prices start at around €160 for a double, not including breakfast.

**Le Coin** **Nieuwe Doelenstraat 5 ⓪020/524 6800, ⓦwww.lecoin.nl.** In a good location opposite the swanky *Hotel de l'Europe*, but a quarter of the price, with doubles starting at €130. All rooms have kitchenettes and are kitted out in contemporary style. Trams #4, #9, #16, #24 or #25 to Muntplein.

**The Crown** **Oudezijds Voorburgwal 21 ⓪020/626 9664, ⓦwww.hotelthecrown.com.** Bang in the middle of the Red Light District, this is really a hotel for single people, and its pricing policy – €40–45 per person – reflects that. The rooms at the back are dark and a bit austere; the ones at the front are nicer, but of course prone to the noise from the busy canal outside. Still, if you're a single person wanting to meet other people you won't mind that. Very safe, and very friendly, despite the location. Late bar until 3am; five minutes' from Centraal


N
JORDAAN
GRACHTENGORDEL WEST
GRACHTENGORDEL SOUTH
OLD CENTRE
MUSEUM QUARTER
Karthuizerhofje
Pianola Museum
Noorderkerk
Hofje Van Brienen
Luthersekerk
Anne Frank Huis
Greenpeace HQ
Westerkerk
Theater-museum
Stedelijk Museum Bureau
Nieuwe Kerk
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De Bijenkorf
Koninklijk Paleis
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Bijbels Museum
Flower Market
Kattenkabinet
De Appel
Melkweg
Van Loon Museum
Rijksmuseum
Van Gogh Museum
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Heineken Experience
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Kerkstraat
Vijzelstraat
Weteringschans
Nieuwendijk
Warmoesstraat
Prins Hendrikkade
Stadhouderskade
Hobbemastraat
Museumplein
Leidseplein
Rembrandtplein
Amstelstraat
Singelgracht
Nicolaas Witsenkade
Den Texstraat
Noorderstraat
Prinsengracht
Zandpad
Vossiusstraat
Schapenburgerpad
Pieter Cornelisz. Hooftstraat
Jan Luijkenstraat
Paulus Potterstraat
Willemsparkweg
Nonthorststraat
Jacob Catskade
Fagelstraat
Nassaukade
Marnixkade
Marnixstraat
Lijnbaansgracht
Palmgracht
Palmstraat
Willemsstraat
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Lindengracht
Lindenstraat
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Egelantiersgracht
Bloemstraat
Bloemgracht
Westermarkt
Rozengracht
Rozenstraat
Lauriergracht
Elandsstraat
Elandsgracht
Looiersgracht
Passeerdersstraat
Haarlemmerdijk
Haarlemmerstraat
Haarlemmerhoutstraat
Vinkenstraat
Brouwersgracht
Nieuwe Westerdokstraat
Oranjesluis
Hoogte Kadijk
Singel
Heiligeweg
Spuistraat
Singel
Heiligeweg
Hartenstraat
Hartenstraat
Oudezijds Achterburgwal
Oudezijds Voorburgwal
Kolveniersburgwal
Kolveniersburgwal
Reguliersdwarsstraat
Herengracht
Henegracht
Kerkstraat
Leidsestraat
Leidsegracht
Leidsekade
Prinsengracht
Keizersgracht
Reguliersgracht
Nieuwe Spiegelstraat
Lange Leidsedwarsstraat
Korte Leidsedwarsstraat
Prinsengracht
Keizersgracht
Kerkstraat
Vijzelstraat
Prinsengracht
1e Weteringdwarsstraat
2e Weteringdwarsstraat
Noorderstraat
Nieuwe Looiersstraat
Fokke Simonszstraat
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Overtoom
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1e Helmerstr.
2e Helmerstr.
Nassaukade
Leidsekade
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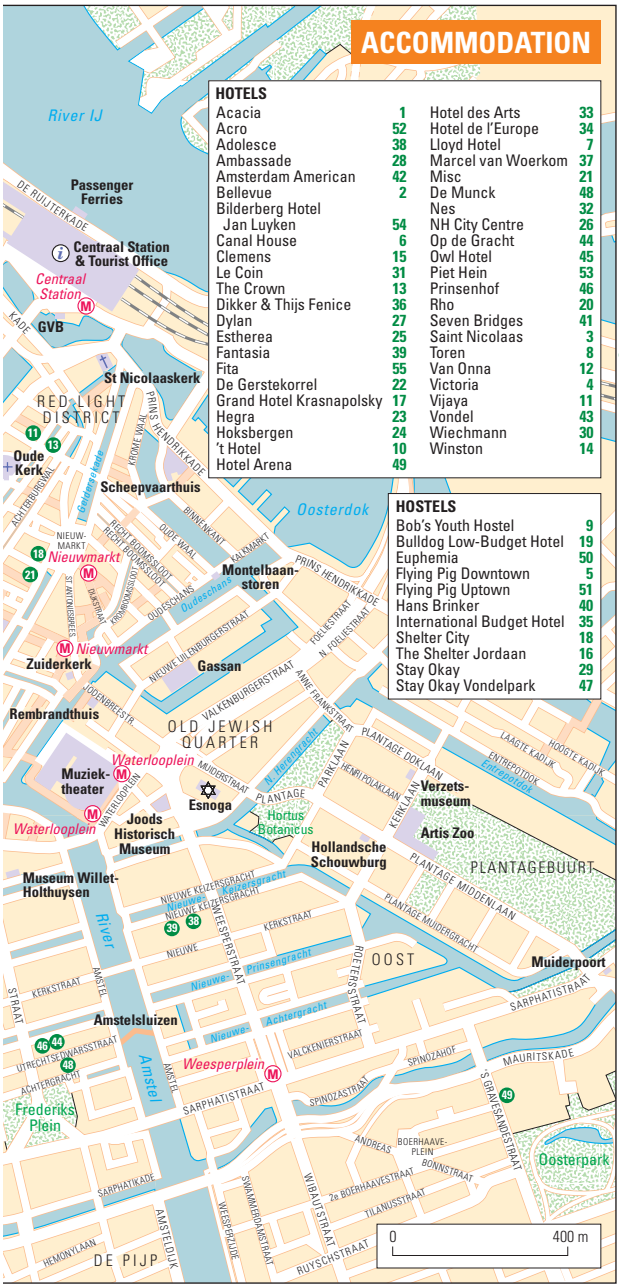
Stadhouderskade
Zandpad
Vossiusstraat
Schapenburgerpad
Pieter Cornelisz. Hooftstraat
Jan Luijkenstraat
Van Baerlestraat
Paulus Potterstraat
Willemsparkweg
Hobbemastraat
Hobbemakade
Museumplein
Nonthorststraat
Marnixkade
Westerkade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Oosterdok
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Nieuwmarkt
BINNENWANT
OUDE WAL
VALMARKT
Montelbaanstoren
PRINS HENDRIKKADE
ST ANTONIESBREES
DIJKSTRAAT
OUDESCHANS
Oudeschans
FOELESTRAAT
N. FOELESTRAAT
Nieuwmarkt
Zuiderkerk
NIEUWE UILENBURGERSTRAAT
Gassan
VALKENBURGERSTRAAT
ANNE FRANKSTRAAT
JODENBREESTR
Rembrandthuis
OLD JEWISH QUARTER
N. Hoofdstraat
PLANTAGE DOKLAAN
LAAGTE KADIJK
HOOGTE KADIJK
Entrepotdok
Waterlooplein
MUIDERSTRAAT
PARKLAAN
HENRI POLAKLAAN
KERKLAAN
Verzetsmuseum
Muziektheater
WATERLOOPLEIN
PLANTAGE
Esnoga
Hortus Botanicus
Joods Historisch Museum
Artis Zoo
Hollandsche Schouwburg
PLANTAGEBUURT
Museum Willet-Holthuysen
NIEUWE KEIZERSGRACHT
Keizersgracht
NIEUWE HERENGRACHT
Herengracht
PLANTAGE MIDDENLAAN
PLANTAGE MUIDERGRACHT
River Amstel
KERKSTRAAT
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SPINOZASTRAAT
'S GRAVESANDESTRAAT
Frederiks Plein
SARPHATISTRAAT
ANDREAS
BOERHAAVEPLEIN
BONNSTRAAT
Oosterpark
SARPHATIKADE
2e BOERHAAVESTRAAT
TILANUSSTRAAT
WIBAUTSTRAAT
SWAMMERDAMSTRAAT
WEESPERZIJDE
AMSTELDIJK
HEMONYLAAN
DE PIJP
RUYSCHSTRAAT
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400 m

Station.

**De Gerstekorrel** **Damstraat 22–24 ⓣ020/624 9771, ⓦwww.gerstekorrel.com.** The cheapest choice in this location, but its rooms are pretty functional – and, at €149 for a double, not all that cheap either. Still, much of the time you will pay less than this, and as there are no common areas you get to eat the inclusive breakfast in bed whether you like it or not. No lift. Trams #4, #9, #16, #24 or #25 to Dam Square.

**Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky** **Dam 9 ⓣ020/554 9111, ⓦwww.nh-hotels.com.** Located in a huge and striking mid-nineteenth-century building, this four-star hotel occupies virtually an entire side of Dam Square. Its rooms are nicely done, if unspectacular, and doubles go for €200–250 (no breakfast), though as usual bargains are sometimes available. Trams #4, #9, #16, #24 or #25 to Dam Square.

**Hotel des Arts** **Rokin 154–156 ⓣ020/620 1558, ⓦwww.hoteldesarts.nl.** Up near Muntplein, the 22 rooms are cosy and well furnished and the welcome is friendly. Prices start at around €145 including breakfast, though the larger canal-facing ones are around €170.

**Hotel de l'Europe** **Nieuwe Doelenstraat 2–8 ⓣ020/531 1777, ⓦwww.leurope.nl.** One of the city's top five hotels, and retaining a wonderful fin-de-siècle charm, with large, well-furnished rooms and an attractive riverside terrace, and with a great central location. Standard doubles start at €365 without breakfast and tax, but this is about as luxurious as the city gets. Trams #4, #9, #16, #24 or #25 to Muntplein.

**Misc** **Kloveniersburgwal 20 ⓣ020/330 6241, ⓦwww.hotelmisc.com.** Very friendly hotel on the edge of the Red Light District with six good-sized rooms each with a different theme. Rates start at €135, including breakfast – excellent value.

**Nes** **Kloveniersburgwal 137–139 ⓣ020/624 4773, ⓦwww.hotelnes.nl.** Pleasant and quiet hotel with helpful staff, with a lift, and well positioned away from noise but close to shops and nightlife. The size and quality of the rooms can vary quite a bit, so don't be afraid to ask to see another if you're disappointed. Prices vary quite a bit too; they start at €75, but you can reckon on paying €130–150 for a double room, and there are triples and quads too for €80–135. Trams #4, #9, #16, #24 or #25 to Muntplein.

**NH City Centre** **Spuistraat 288 ⓣ020/420 4545, ⓦwww.nh-hotels.com.** This appealing chain hotel occupies a sympathetically renovated 1920s Art Deco former textile factory, and is well situated for the cafés and bars of the Spui, and the Museum Quarter. Rooms vary in size, some have canal views, and all boast extremely comfy beds and good showers. Doubles from €95, more at weekends. The buffet breakfast is extra, but will set you up for the day. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Spui.

**Rho** **Nes 5 ⓣ020/620 7371, ⓦwww.rhohotel.com.** Built as a theatre in 1908, the lovely large high-ceilinged, fin-de-siècle lobby gives a slightly misleading impression: the rooms are on the small side and have been unimaginatively modernized. Still, it's pleasant enough, and in a good central location just off Dam Square. Doubles from €115 including buffet breakfast. Daily bike rental available. Trams #4, #9, #16, #24 or #25 to Dam Square.

**Sint Nicolaas** **Spuistraat 1a ⓣ020/626 1384, ⓦwww.hotelnicolaas.nl.** More characterful than many of the other budget hotels in the area, the *St Nicolaas*'s cosy downstairs bar-reception gives way to around thirty recently refurbished rooms, all with baths, that start at around €120 in high season. Very conveniently located too, just five minutes' walk from Centraal Station.

**Victoria** **Damrak 1–5 ⓣ020/623 4255, ⓦwww.parkplaza.com.** This tall, elegant building opposite Centraal Station has been one of the city's best hotels for years, although its decor is beginning to look fusty compared to the crop of sleek options that has arrived in recent years. Still, its location couldn't be more convenient, and there are often bargains to be had in its well-kitted-out rooms; amenities include a fitness centre and pool. The cheapest doubles are about €250–300, not including breakfast.

**Vijaya** **Oudezijds Voorburgwal 44 ⓣ020/626 9406, ⓦwww.hotelvijaya.com.** Right in the heart of the Red

Light District, next door but one to the Amstelkring (see p.53), this is a warren of rooms spread over a couple of old canal houses. It's rather threadbare, but not bad for the €100 price for a double, and has a friendly charm that's only enhanced by the Indian restaurant downstairs. No lift. Ten minutes' walk from Centraal Station.

**Winston** **Warmoesstraat 129 ⓣ020/623 1380, ⓦwww.winston.nl.** This self-consciously young and cool hotel has funky rooms individually decorated with wacko art and a busy ground-floor bar that has occasional live music. It's a formula that works a treat; the Winston is popular and often full – though this is probably also due to its low prices: €70–80 for a double, with breakfast, for the cheapest rooms during the week. Lift and full disabled access. Ten minutes' walk from Centraal Station.

## Grachtengordel

**Ambassade** **Herengracht 341 ⓣ020/555 0222, ⓦwww.ambassade-hotel.nl.** Elegant canalside hotel made up of ten seventeenth-century houses, with smartly furnished lounges, a well-stocked library and comfortable en-suite rooms from €185 and suites from €300. Friendly staff and free 24-hour Internet access. Breakfast is an extra €16, but well worth it. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Spui.

**Amsterdam American** **Leidsekade 97 ⓣ020/556 3000, ⓦwww.amsterdamamerican.com.** Landmark Art Deco hotel just off Leidseplein that dates from 1902, though the bedrooms themselves are mostly kitted out in standard modern style. Large, double-glazed doubles from around €150, excluding tax and breakfast. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Leidseplein.

**Canal House** **Keizersgracht 148 ⓣ020/622 5182, ⓦwww.canalhouse.nl.** Intelligently restored seventeenth-century building, centrally located on one of the principal canals. Comfortable rooms, with doubles from €140. Trams #13 or #17 from Centraal Station to Westermarkt.

**Clemens** **Raadhuisstraat 39 ⓣ020/624 6089, ⓦwww.clemenshotel.nl.** Friendly, well-run budget hotel, with knowledgeable owner, close to the Anne Frank Huis, this is one of the better options along this busy main road. Individually decorated doubles without shower from €60–80, with shower from €120; breakfast is extra. Prices stay the same throughout the year. All rooms offer free Internet connection, and you can rent laptops for just a few euros. Trams #13 or #17 from Centraal Station to Westermarkt.

**Dikker & Thijs Fenice** **Prinsengracht 444 ⓣ020/620 1212, ⓦwww.dtfh.nl.** Small and stylish hotel not far from Leidseplein. Rooms vary in decor but all include a mini-bar, telephone and TV – those on the top floor have good views of the city. Standard doubles from €150 including breakfast. Trams #1, #2 or #5 to the corner of Prinsengracht and Leidsestraat.

**Dylan** **Keizersgracht 384 ⓣ020/530 2010, ⓦwww.dylanamsterdam.com.** This stylish hotel is housed in a seventeenth-century building that centres on a beautiful courtyard and terrace. Its 41 sumptuous rooms range in style from opulent reds or greens to minimal white and oatmeal shades, and have flat-screen TVs and stereos. The restaurant combines French and African cuisine and the bar is open to non-guests. The ambiance is hip without being pretentious, and that goes for the staff too, making it popular with many guests returning. Luxury suites overlooking the Keizersgracht canal will set you back €1500; standard doubles from €420. Breakfast €24 extra. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Leidsestraat/Keizersgracht.

**Estherea** **Singel 303–309 ⓣ020/624 5146, ⓦwww.estherea.nl.** This smart, standard-issue hotel converted from a couple of canal houses is in a great location, and although the rooms lack the personal touch they are all perfectly adequate; the best overlook the canal. €250 excluding tax and breakfast (an extra €14). Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Spui.

**Hegra** **Herengracht 269 ⓣ020/623 7877, ⓦwww.hegrahotel.com.** Welcoming atmosphere and relatively inexpensive for the location, on a handsome stretch of canal near the Spui. Rooms are small but comfortable, either en suite or with shared facilities. Doubles from €65 with breakfast,

€80 en suite. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Spui.

**Hoksbergen** Singel 301 ⓣ020/626 6043, ⓦwww.hotelhoksbergen.nl. Agreeable, standard-issue hotel, with a light and open breakfast room overlooking the Singel canal. Basic en-suite rooms, all with telephone and TV, from €90 for the smallest room to larger doubles for €120; breakfast and tax included. Self-catering apartments too. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Spui.

**'t Hotel** Leliegracht 18 ⓣ020/422 2741, ⓦwww.amsterdamby.com/thotel. Extremely appealing hotel located in an old high-gabled house along a quiet stretch of canal. The eight spacious rooms are decorated in bright, modern style with large beds and either bath or shower. No groups. Minimum three-night stay at the weekend; doubles from €125 including breakfast. Trams #13 or #17 from Centraal Station to Westermarkt.

**Marcel van Woerkom** Leidsestraat 87 ⓣ020/622 9834, ⓦwww.marcelamsterdam.com. Well-known, popular B&B run by a graphic designer and artist, who attracts like-minded people to this stylish restored house with four en-suite doubles available for two, three or four people sharing. Relaxing and peaceful amidst the buzz of the city, with regulars returning year after year, so you'll need to book well in advance in high season. Breakfast isn't included, but there are tea- and coffee-making facilities. Rates start at €120 for a double. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Leidseplein.

**De Munck** Achtergracht 3 ⓣ020/623 6283, ⓦwww.hoteldemunck.com. This pleasant, family-run hotel off the beaten track, south of the centre and metres from the River Amstel, has neat and trim modern rooms, and the Sixties-style breakfast room sports a Wurlitzer jukebox with a good collection of 1960s hits. Doubles €105 including breakfast. Booking recommended. Tram #4 from Centraal Station to Frederiksplein.

**Op de Gracht** Prinsengracht 826 ⓣ020/626 1937, ⓦwww.opdegracht.nl. This B&B, run by the very pleasant Jolanda Schipper, is in a good-looking old house on one of the main canals. The two rooms are tastefully decorated, both with en-suite bathrooms. Minimum stay two nights. Doubles €90–100. Tram #4 from Centraal Station to Prinsengracht.

**Prinsenhof** Prinsengracht 810 ⓣ020/623 1772, ⓦwww.hotelprinsenhof.com. Tastefully decorated, this is one of the city's top budget options with doubles for €65 without shower, €85 with. Booking essential. Tram #4 from Centraal Station to Prinsengracht.

**Seven Bridges** Reguliersgracht 31 ⓣ020/623 1329, ⓦwww.sevenbridgeshotel.nl. One of the city's most charming hotels – and excellent value for money too. It takes its name from its canalside location, which affords a view of no less than seven dinky little bridges. Beautifully decorated in antique style, its spotless rooms are regularly revamped. Rates start at €110 per double, and vary with the view. Small and popular, so advance reservations are pretty much essential. Breakfast is included in the price and served in your room. Trams #16, #24 or #25 from Centraal Station to Keizersgracht.

**Toren** Keizersgracht 164 ⓣ020/622 6033, ⓦwww.hoteltoren.nl. The forty bedrooms are distributed between two sympathetically revamped seventeenth-century canal houses just a few doors away from each other. One of them – no.164 – was once the home of a Dutch prime minister, and both are now popular with American visitors. The bedrooms themselves are large, modern and well-appointed. Friendly and efficient staff. Doubles from €185. Trams #13 or #17 from Centraal Station to Westermarkt.

**Wiechmann** Prinsengracht 328–332 ⓣ020/626 3321, ⓦwww.hotelwiechmann.nl. Family-run for over fifty years, this medium-sized hotel occupies an attractively restored canal house, close to the Anne Frank Huis, with dark wooden beams and restrained style throughout. Large, bright rooms are in perfect condition with TV and shower and cost €130, €20 more for a canal view. Prices stay the same throughout the year. Trams #13 or #17 from Centraal Station to Westermarkt.

## The Jordaan and the Western Docklands

**Acacia** Lindengracht 251 ⓣ020/622 1460, ⓔacacia.nl@wxs.nl. Small hotel,

situated in the heart of the Jordaan, right on a corner, so some of the rooms have wide views of the canal and its adjoining streets. Rooms, which sleep two to four people, are rather nondescript with small beds and a shower room. There are also self-catering studios (€90). Doubles from €80 including breakfast. A fifteen-minute walk from Centraal Station.

**Van Onna** **Bloemgracht 102 ⓣ020/626 5801, ⓦwww.hotelvanonna.nl.** A quiet, well-maintained place on a tranquil canal. The building dates back over three hundred years and still retains some of its original fixtures, though the rooms themselves are rather modest, with basic furniture and blankets on beds. Simple setup – no TV, no smoking and cash payment only. Booking advised. Rooms sleeping up to four people for €45 per person, including breakfast. Trams #13 or #17 from Centraal Station to Westermarkt.

## The Old Jewish Quarter and the Eastern Docklands

**Adolesce** **Nieuwe Keizersgracht 26 ⓣ020/626 3959, ⓦwww.adolesce.nl.** Popular and welcoming hotel in an old canal house not far from Waterlooplein. There are ten neat and trim modern rooms and a large dining room. Doubles €100; triples also available for €120. No breakfast. Tram #9 from Centraal Station to Waterlooplein.

**Fantasia** **Nieuwe Keizersgracht 16 ⓣ020/623 8259, ⓦwww.fantasia-hotel.com.** Appealing, family-run hotel in an intelligently revamped old canal house on a broad, quiet canal just off the River Amstel; the eighteen en-suite rooms are all well maintained and the attic rooms are especially attractive. Doubles cost €90, including breakfast; triples (€125) and a four-bed family room (€145) are also available. Closed Jan–March and most of Dec. Tram #9 from Centraal Station to Waterlooplein.

**Hotel Arena** **'s Gravesandestraat 51 ⓣ020/850 2400, ⓦwww.hotelarena.nl.** A little way east of the centre, in a renovated old convent on the edge of the Oosterpark, this place has been thoroughly revamped, transforming a popular hostel into a hip three-star hotel complete with split-level rooms and minimalist decor. Despite the odd pretentious flourish, it manages to retain a relaxed vibe attracting both businesspeople and travellers alike. Lively bar, intimate restaurant, and late-night club (Fri & Sat) located within the former chapel. Doubles start at €110. Tram #7 from Leidseplein.

**Lloyd Hotel** **Oostelijke Handelskade 34 ⓣ020/561 3636, ⓦwww.lloydhotel.com.** Situated in the up-and-coming Oosterdok (Eastern Islands) district, this ex-prison and migrant workers' hostel has been renovated to become Amsterdam's coolest hotel. Rather pretentiously subtitled a "cultural embassy", it has an arts centre too, with regular exhibitions, readings and performances, an art library, and a nice, bustling feel that revolves around its airy central restaurant and lobby area on the ground floor. Uniquely it serves all kinds of travellers, with rooms ranging from one-star affairs for €95 to €295 offerings. Some rooms are great, others not, so don't be afraid to ask to change. The location is better than you might think – just five minutes' by tram #26 from Centraal Station, but at these prices you still might prefer to be in the centre.

## The Museum Quarter and the Vondelpark

**Acro** **Jan Luykenstraat 44 ⓣ020/662 5538, ⓦwww.acro-hotel.nl.** Small and fairly functional rooms, but a friendly welcome and a nice bar on the ground floor, mean that this hotel gets booked up a long way in advance. Doubles €100–135 with breakfast. Trams #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Van Baerlestraat.

**Bilderberg Hotel Jan Luyken** **Jan Luykenstraat 58 ⓣ020/573 0730, ⓦwww.janluyken.nl.** Good-sized rooms, nicely refurbished relatively recently, mark out this decent stab at a mini four-star, full-service hotel, with prices starting at €150 for one of the smaller standard rooms. There's a nice lounge and bar downstairs too. Trams #2 or #5 from Centraal Station.

**College** **Roelof Hartstraat 1;** see map

p.109. ⓣ020/571 1511, ⓦwww.thesteingroup.com/college. Converted from an old schoolhouse, the *College* is one of the most elegant and original recent additions to Amsterdam's hotel scene. Original because it's largely run by students from the city's catering school; elegant because of the sheer class of the refurbishment. The cheapest doubles start at €235 and are well worth it.

**Filosoof** **Anna van den Vondelstraat 6; see map p.109. ⓣ020/683 3013, ⓦwww.hotelfilosoof.nl.** A lovely small hotel, delightfully overseen by the philosophical Ida, who saw fit to decorate each room according to a different philosophical theme when it opened thirty years ago. It's all beautifully kept, nothing is too much trouble, and the garden outside is a rare Amsterdam treat. Doubles cost around €130, including breakfast. Tram #1 from Centraal Station.

**Fita** **Jan Luykenstraat 37 ⓣ020/679 0976, ⓦwww.fita.nl.** Mid-sized, friendly family-run hotel in a quiet spot between the Vondelpark and the museums. Comfortable en-suite doubles from €125. Trams #2 or #5 to Van Baerlestraat.

**Owl Hotel** **Roemer Visscherstraat 1 ⓣ020/618 9484, ⓦwww.owl-hotel.nl.** The reasonably priced doubles are relatively blandly furnished, but its location is nice and quiet, with a downstairs lounge opening onto a lovely garden, and – run by the same family for nearly forty years – the staff are a welcoming bunch. Doubles from €125. Tram #1 from Centraal Station.

**Piet Hein** **Vossiusstraat 53 ⓣ020/662 7205, ⓦwww.hotelpiethein.nl.** Five minutes' walk from Leidseplein, this sleek three-star has large rooms with views over the entrance to the Vondelpark and slightly more expensive rooms in the modern annexe overlooking its peaceful back garden. Rates start at €145. Bar open till 1am. Lift access. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Leidseplein.

**Toro** **Koningslaan 64; see map p.109. ⓣ020/673 7223, ⓦwww.hoteltoro.nl.** Housed in a grand old villa overlooking the Vondelpark's westerly reaches, this hotel is like a small country house, with a comfy downstairs sitting room and nicely furnished rooms from €135, some of which overlook the park. A nice choice if you don't mind being slightly out of the action. Tram #2 from Centraal Station.

**Vondel** **Vondelstraat 18–30 ⓣ020/616 4075, ⓦwww.hotelvondel.com.** This newly refurbished hotel tries hard to be cool and sleek, and mostly succeeds, with black paint and light natural wood characterizing the lovely rooms with flatscreen TVs. There's a pleasant bar and breakfast room and modern art decorates the walls of the common areas. Doubles from around €160. Tram #1 from Centraal Station.

## The Outer Districts

**Hotel Okura** **Ferdinand Bolstraat 333; see map, p.119. ⓣ020/678 7111, ⓦwww.okura.nl.** Don't be fooled by the concrete, purpose-built facade, this deluxe five-star hotel situated close to the RAI comes equipped with all the luxuries you would expect, such as a health club and sauna, and even a shopping arcade with a Japanese food store. Facilities in its 335 rooms include huge marble bathrooms, and, in its suites, mood lighting and control units for the curtains. Doubles from €295. Two of its four restaurants (see p.124) have Michelin stars. If you're feeling particularly flush you could book "The Suite", set over two floors with a suspended glass staircase, private butler and cinema; a night here will set you back a cool €10,000. Tram #25 from Centraal Station to Cornelis Troostplein.

**Van Ostade** **Van Ostadestraat 123; see map p.119. ⓣ020/679 3452, ⓦwww.bicyclehotel.com.** Friendly, youthful place down a quiet residential street, not far from Albert Cuyp market in the Pijp. It bills itself as the "bicycle hotel", renting bikes for €5 per day and giving advice on routes and suchlike. Garage parking for two cars (€17.50), though you'll need to book in advance. Basic but clean two-, three- and four-bed rooms start from €75 with shared facilities, including breakfast. Tram #25 from Centraal Station to 1e van de Helststraat.

# Hostels

The least expensive central option is to take a dormitory bed in a hostel – and there are plenty to choose from: Hostelling International places, unofficial private hostels, even Christian hostels. Most hostels will either provide (relatively) clean bed linen or charge a few euros for it, though frankly your own sleeping bag might be a better option. Many hostels also lock guests out for a short period each day to clean the place, and some set a nightly curfew, though these are usually late enough not to cause too much of a problem. Many hostels don't accept reservations from June to August.

## The Old Centre

**Bob's Youth Hostel** **Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 92 ⓣ020/623 0063, ⓦwww.bobshostel.nl.** An old favourite with backpackers, Bob's is a lively place with small, basic dorm beds for €19 per person, including breakfast in the coffeeshop on the ground floor. They also let four apartments (€70 for two people, €80 for three). However, they kick everyone out at 10.30am to clean, which is not so good if you want a lie-in. Just 10 minutes' walk from Centraal Station.

**Bulldog Low-Budget Hotel** **Oudezijds Voorburgwal 220 ⓣ020/620 3822, ⓦwww.bulldoghotel.com.** Part of the *Bulldog* coffeeshop chain, and recently renovated, with a bar and DVD lounge downstairs complete with leather couches and soft lighting. Dorm beds with TV and shower start at €28, including breakfast, with linen €3 extra, and there are also double rooms for €90, as well as fully-equipped apartments from €135 – all with bathrooms and TVs. Trams #4, #9, #16 or #24 from Centraal Station to Dam Square, then a three-minute walk.

**Flying Pig Downtown** **Nieuwendijk 100 ⓣ020/420 6822, ⓦwww.flyingpig.nl.** Clean, large and well run by ex-travellers familiar with the needs of backpackers. Free use of kitchen facilities, no curfew, there's a late-night coffeeshop next door and the hostel bar is open all night. Justifiably popular, and a very good deal, with mixed dorm beds from just €23 depending on the size of the dorm; queen-size bunks sleeping two also available; €10 deposit for sheets and keys. During the peak season you'll need to book well in advance. Just a five-minute walk from Centraal Station. See also the *Flying Pig Uptown*, p.144.

**Shelter City** **Barndesteeg 21 ⓣ020/625 3230, ⓦwww.shelter.nl.** A non-evangelical Christian youth hostel smack in the middle of the Red-Light District. Beds in large dorms for €19, including bed linen, shower and sizeable breakfast, which makes this one of the city's best deals (€23 for a bed in a smaller dorm). Dorms are single-sex; lockers require a €5 deposit and there's a midnight curfew (1am at weekends). You might be handed a booklet on Jesus when you check in, but you'll get a quiet night's sleep and the sheets are clean. Metro Nieuwmarkt. See also *The Shelter Jordaan*, p.144.

**Stay Okay** **Stadsdoelen Kloveniersburgwal 97 ⓣ020/624 6832, ⓦwww.stayokay.com/stadsdoelen.** The closest to Centraal Station of the two official hostels, with clean, semi-private dorms at €20 for members, who get priority in high season; non-members pay €23.75. Price includes linen, breakfast and locker, plus use of communal kitchen. Guests get a range of discounts on activities in the city too, and you can also book Eurolines bus tickets here, with members receiving a ten-percent discount. The bar overlooks the canal and serves good-value if basic food, and there's a 2am curfew (though the door opens for three 15min intervals between 2am and 7am). Metro Nieuwmarkt, or trams #4, #9, #16, #24 or #25 from Centraal Station to Muntplein. See also the city's other HI hostel, the *Stay Okay Vondelpark* (see p.144), which has a greater choice of rooms.

## Grachtengordel

**Euphemia** **Fokke Simonszstraat 1–9 ⓣ020/622 9045, ⓦwww.euphemia-**

**hotel.com.** Situated a shortish walk from Leidseplein and the major museums, with a likeable laidback atmosphere and basic but large rooms. Doubles from €70, triples from €75. Breakfast extra €7. Booking advised. Trams #16, #24 or #25 from Centraal Station to the Weteringschans roundabout.

**Hans Brinker** **Kerkstraat 136 ⓣ020/622 0687, ⓦwww.hans-brinker.com.** Well-established and raucously popular Amsterdam hostel, with around 600 beds. Dorms are basic and clean and beds go for around €21, and singles, doubles and triples are also available. All rooms are en suite. The facilities are good: free Internet after 10pm, disco every night, and it's near to the buzz of Leidseplein too. A hostel to head for if you're out for a good time (and not too bothered about getting a solid night's sleep), though be prepared to change dorms during your stay. Walk-in policy only. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Prinsengracht.

**International Budget Hotel** **Leidsegracht 76 ⓣ020/624 2784, ⓦwww.internationalbudgethostel.com.** An excellent budget option on a peaceful little canal in the heart of the city, with the same owners as the *Euphemia* (see above). Small, simple rooms sleeping up to four with shared facilities and costing €25–30 per person. Young, friendly staff. Trams #1, #2 or #5 to Prinsengracht.

## The Jordaan and the Western Docklands

**The Shelter Jordaan** **Bloemstraat 179 ⓣ020/624 4717, ⓦwww.shelter.nl.** The second of Amsterdam's two Christian youth hostels (the other is *Shelter City*, see p.143). Great-value beds start from €19 per dorm bed (€16 in low season) including breakfast: bed linen is €2 extra. Fri & Sat €3 supplement. Dorms sleeping 14–20 are single-sex and non-smoking; downstairs there's a decent café. Lockers require a €5 deposit. Sited in a particularly attractive and quiet part of the Jordaan, close to the Lijnbaansgracht canal. Trams #13 or #17 from Centraal Station to Marnixstraat.

## The Museum Quarter and the Vondelpark

**Flying Pig Uptown** **Vossiusstraat 46 ⓣ020/400 4187, ⓦwww.flyingpig.nl.** The better of the two *Flying Pig* hostels, facing the Vondelpark and close to the city's most important museums. Immaculately clean and well maintained by a staff of travellers, who understand their backpacking guests. Free use of kitchen facilities, no curfew and good tourist information. Fourteen-bed dorms start at €23.90 per person and there are a few two-person queensize bunks, as well as double rooms. Great value. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Leidseplein, then walk.

**Stay Okay Vondelpark** **Zandpad 5 ⓣ020/589 8996, ⓦwww.stayokay.com/vondelpark.** Well located and, for facilities, the better of the city's two HI hostels, with a bar, restaurant, TV lounge, Internet access and bicycle shed, plus various discount facilities for tours and museums. Non-member rates are €23.75 per person in the dorms, including use of all facilities, shower, sheets and breakfast. Singles, doubles and rooms sleeping up to eight are also available, for prices ranging from €26 per person in an eight-person dorm to €75 or so for a double room. Secure lockers and no curfew. To be sure of a place in high season you'll need to book at least two months ahead. Trams #1, #2 or #5 from Centraal Station to Leidseplein, then walk.

# Essentials

# Arrival

Arriving in Amsterdam by train and plane could hardly be easier. Schiphol, Amsterdam's international **airport**, is a quick and convenient train ride away from Centraal Station, the city's **international train station**, which is itself just a ten-minute metro ride from Amstel Station, the terminus for long-distance and international buses.

## By air

Amsterdam's international airport, **Schiphol** (T 0900/7244 7465, W www.schiphol.nl), is located about 15km southwest of the city centre. Trains run from there to Amsterdam Centraal Station every ten minutes during the day, every hour at night (midnight–6am); the journey takes 15–20 minutes and costs €3.60 one way (€6.20 return). There are plenty of taxis, and the fare from Schiphol to most parts of the city centre is €40–45; and hotel shuttles like the *Connexxion* service (T 038/339 4741, W www.schipholhotelshuttle.nl), which departs from the designated bus stop outside the Arrivals Hall every half an hour (on the half-hour) from 6am to 9pm at a cost of €12 one-way, €19 return. The route varies with the needs of the passengers it picks up at the airport, but buses take about thirty minutes to get from the airport to the city centre. Tickets are available from the *Connexxion* desk in the Arrivals Hall.

## By train

Amsterdam's **Centraal Station** (CS) has regular connections with key cities in Germany, Belgium and France, as well as all the larger towns and cities of the Netherlands. Amsterdam also has several suburban train stations, but these are principally for the convenience of commuters. For all rail enquiries contact **NS** (Netherlands Railways; international enquiries T 0900/9296; domestic enquiries T 0900/9292; W www.ns.nl).

## By bus

**Eurolines** (T 020/560 8788, W www.eurolines.nl) long-distance, international buses arrive at Amstel Station, about 3.5km to the southeast of Centraal Station. The metro journey to Centraal Station takes about ten minutes.

# City transport

Almost all of Amsterdam's leading attractions are clustered in or near the city centre, within easy walking – and even easier cycling – distance of each other. For longer jaunts, the city has a first-rate public transport system, run by the **GVB**, comprising trams, buses, a smallish metro and four passenger ferries across the river IJ to the northern suburbs. Centraal Station is the hub of the system with a multitude of trams and buses departing from outside on Stationsplein, which is also the location of a metro station and a GVB public transport information office. There's a taxi rank on Stationsplein too.

## Trams, buses and the metro

The city centre is crisscrossed by **trams**. Two of the more useful are trams #2 and #5, which link Centraal Station

with Leidsestraat and the Rijksmuseum every ten minutes or so during the day. **Buses** are mainly useful for going to the outskirts, and the same applies to the **metro**, which has just two city centre stations, Nieuwmarkt and Waterlooplein. Trams, buses and the metro operate daily between 6am and midnight, supplemented by a limited number of nightbuses (*nachtbussen*). All tram and bus stops display a detailed map of the network. For further details on all services, head for the main GVB information office (Mon–Fri 7am–9pm, Sat & Sun 8am–9pm; ⓣ0900/8011, ⓦwww.gvb.nl) on Stationsplein. Its free, English-language *Tourist Guide to Public Transport* is very helpful, and it provides free transport maps too.

The most common type of **ticket**, usable on all forms of GVB transport, is the **strippenkaart**, a card divided into strips: fold your *strippenkaart* over to expose the number of strips required for your journey and then insert it into the on-board franking machine. Amsterdam's public transport system is divided into zones, and one person making a journey within one zone costs two strips. The "Centre" zone covers the city centre and its immediate surroundings (well beyond Singelgracht), and thus two strips will cover more or less every journey you're likely to make. If you travel into an additional zone, it costs three strips, and so on. More than one person can use a *strippenkaart*, as long as the requisite number of strips is stamped. After franking, you can use any GVB tram, bus and the metro for up to one hour. Currently, a two-strip *strippenkaart* costs €1.60, three-strip €2.40, and you can buy these on the bus or tram. However you're better off buying tickets in advance, from tobacconists, the GVB, the VVV and metro stations – a fifteen-strip costs €6.70 and a 45-strip €19.80.

You can opt instead for a **dagkaart** (day ticket), which gives unlimited access to the GVB system for up to a maximum of three days. Prices are €6.30 for 24 hours, €10 for 48 hours, and €13 for 72 hours. Finally, note that the GVB tries hard to keep fare dodging down to a minimum and wherever you're travelling, and at whatever time of day, there's a reasonable chance you'll have your ticket checked. If you are caught without a valid ticket, you risk an on-the-spot fine.

## The Canal Bus

One good way to get around Amsterdam's waterways is to take the **Canal Bus** (ⓣ020/623 9886, ⓦwww.canal.nl). This operates on three circular routes, coloured green, red and blue, which meet at various places: at the jetty opposite Centraal Station beside Prins Hendrikkade; on the Singelgracht (opposite the Rijksmuseum), near the Leidseplein; and by the Stadhuis on Waterlooplein. There are fourteen stops in all and together they give easy access to all the major sights. Boats leave from opposite Centraal Station every half an hour or so during high season between 10am and 5.30pm, and a day ticket for all three routes, allowing you to hop on and off as many times as you like, costs €17 per adult, €11 for children (4–12 years old); it's valid until noon the following day and entitles the bearer to minor discounts at several museums. Two-day passes cost €28.50.

## The Museumboot

A similar boat service, the **Museumboot** (ⓣ020/530 1090, ⓦwww.lovers.nl), calls at seven jetties located at or near many of the city's major attractions. It departs from opposite Centraal Station (every 30min; 10am–5pm) and a come-and-go-as-you-please day ticket costs €15, children €13 (4–12 years old).

## Canal Bikes

**Canal Bikes** (ⓣ020/626 5574, ⓦwww.canal.nl) are four-seater **pedaloes**, which take a lifetime to get anywhere but are nevertheless good fun unless – of

course – it's raining. You can rent them at four central locations: on the Singelgracht opposite the Rijksmuseum; the Prinsengracht outside the Anne Frankhuis; on Keizersgracht at Leidsestraat; and behind Leidseplein. Rental prices per person per hour are €7 (3–4 people) or €8 (1–2 people), plus a refundable deposit of €50. They can be picked up at one location and left at any of the others; opening times are daily 9am–6pm, until 9.30pm in July and August.

## Bicycles

One of the most agreeable ways to explore Amsterdam is by **bicycle**. The city has an excellent network of designated bicycle lanes (*fietspaden*) and for once cycling isn't a fringe activity – there are cyclists everywhere. Indeed, much to the chagrin of the city's taxi drivers, the needs of the cyclist often take precedence over those of the motorist and by law, if there's a collision, it's always the driver's fault. Bike rental is straightforward. There are lots of **rental companies** (*fietsenverhuur*) but MacBike (daily 9am–5.45pm; ⓣ020/620 0985, ⓦwww.macbike.nl) is perhaps the most convenient, with three rental outlets in central Amsterdam, one at the east end of Centraal Station, a second beside Waterlooplein at Mr Visserplein 2, and a third near Leidseplein at Weteringschans 2. They charge €6 for three hours, €8.50 per day, €18 for three days and €30 for a week for a standard bicycle; 21-speed cycles cost about half as much again. All companies, including MacBike, ask for some type of security, usually in the form of a cash deposit (some will take credit card imprints) and/or passport.

## Taxis

The centre of Amsterdam is geared up for trams and bicycles rather than cars, with motorists having to negotiate a convoluted one-way system, avoid getting boxed onto tram lines and steer round herds of cyclists. As such, **taxis** are not as much use as they are in many other cities. They are, however, plentiful: taxi ranks are liberally distributed across the city centre and they can also be hailed on the street. If all else fails, call ⓣ020/677 7777. **Fares** are metered and reasonably high, but distances are small: the trip from Centraal Station to the Leidseplein, for example, will cost around €12, €2 more to Museumplein – and about fifteen percent more late at night.

## Organized tours

No one could say the Amsterdam tourist industry doesn't make the most of its canals, with a veritable armada of glass-topped **cruise boats** shuttling along the

### Tour operators

**Mee in Mokum** Keizersgracht 346 ⓣ020/625 1390. Guided walking tours of the old centre and the Jordaan provided by long-time – and often older – Amsterdam residents. Tours run four or five times weekly; €3 per person. Advance reservations required.

**Reederij P. Kooij** on the Rokin, beside the Queen Wilhelmina statue ⓣ020/623 3810, ⓦwww.rederijkooij.nl. Among the best of the waterway cruise operators, with a standard range of cruises by day and by night, and prices that are often cheaper than the rest. Also has a (more crowded) jetty opposite Centraal Station on Stationsplein, and by Leidseplein.

**Yellow Bike Tours** Nieuwezijds Kolk 29, off Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal ⓣ020/620 6940, ⓦwww.yellowbike.nl. Three-hour guided cycling tours around the city (April to mid-Oct 2 daily) that cost €18.50 per person, including the bike. Other tours – of the Jordaan, Red Light District, etc – available. Advance reservations required.

city's waterways, offering everything from quick hour-long excursions to fully-fledged dinner cruises. There are several major operators and they occupy the prime pitches – the jetties near Centraal Station on Stationsplein, beside the Damrak and on Prins Hendrikkade. **Prices** are fairly uniform with a one-hour tour costing around €10 per adult, €6 per child (4–12 years old), and around €25 (€15) for a two-hour cruise at night. The big companies also offer more specialized boat trips – dinner cruises from around €50, literary cruises, and most notably the weekly Architecture Cruise run by Lovers (Ⓣ 020/530 1090, Ⓦ www.lovers.nl; €19.50/14.50). All these cruises – and especially the shorter and less expensive ones – are extremely popular and long queues are common throughout the summer. One way of avoiding much of the crush is to walk down the Damrak from Centraal Station to the jetty at the near end of the Rokin, where the first-rate Reederij P. Kooij (who also have a jetty beside Centraal Station) offers all the basic cruises at competitive prices.

# Information and maps

Information is easy to get hold of, either from the Netherlands Board of Tourism, via the Internet, or, after arrival, from any of the city's tourist offices, the **VVV**s (pronounced "fay-fay-fay"). There's a VVV office on platform 2 at Centraal Station (Mon–Sat 8am–8pm, Sun 9am–5pm); a second, main one directly across from the main station entrance on Stationsplein (daily 9am–5pm); and a third on Leidsestraat, just off the Leidseplein (daily 9am–5pm). These three offices share one premium-rate information line on Ⓣ 0900/400 4040, and a website at Ⓦ www.visitamsterdam.nl. They offer advice and information and sell a range of maps and guide books as well as tickets and passes for public transport. They also take in-person bookings for canal cruises and other organized excursions, sell theatre and concert tickets, and operate an extremely efficient accommodation reservation service for just €3 plus a refundable deposit which is subtracted from your final bill.

## What's on information

For information about what's on, there's either the VVV or the **Amsterdam Uitburo**, the cultural office of the city council, housed in a corner of the Stadsschouwburg theatre on Leidseplein (Mon–Sat 10am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm, Sun noon–6pm; Ⓣ 0900/0191). You can get advice here on anything remotely

### Tourist passes

The VVV's much touted **Amsterdam Card** provides free and unlimited use of the city's public transport network, a complimentary canal cruise and free admission to the bulk of the city's museums and attractions. It costs €33 for one day, €43 for two consecutive days and €53 for three, again consecutive, days. Altogether it's not a bad deal, but you have to work fairly hard to make it worthwhile. It's available from any branch of the VVV.

cultural, as well as tickets and copies of listings magazines. Amongst the latter, there's a choice between the AUB's own monthly *Uitkrant*, which is comprehensive and free but in Dutch, or the VVV's *Day by Day in Amsterdam*. Alternatively, the newspaper *Het Parool*'s Wednesday entertainment supplement, *Uit en Thuis*, is one of the most up-to-date reference sources.

## Maps

Our **maps** should be more than adequate for most purposes, but if you need one on a larger scale, or with a street index, then pick up *The Rough Guide Map to Amsterdam*, which has the added advantage of being waterproof and rip-proof. This marks all the key sights as well as the location of many restaurants, bars and hotels, but it does not extend to the outer suburbs. For this, the best bet is the Falk map of Amsterdam.

# Festivals and events

Most of Amsterdam's festivals are music and arts events, supplemented by a sprinkling of religious celebrations and, as you might expect, the majority take place in the summer. The **Queen's Birthday** celebration at the end of April is the city's most touted and exciting annual event, with a large portion of the city given over to an impromptu flea market and lots of street-partying. On a more cultural level, the art extravaganza, the **Holland Festival**, held throughout June, attracts a handful of big names. Check with the VVV (see opposite) for further details.

**Stille Omgang (Silent Procession)**
Sunday closest to March 15 Ⓦ www.stille-omgang.nl. Procession by local Catholics commemorating the Miracle of Amsterdam, starting and finishing at Spui and passing through the Red Light District.
**Koninginnedag (Queen's Birthday)**
April 30. Celebrations for Queen Beatrix take place throughout the whole of the Netherlands, though festivities in Amsterdam tend to be somewhat wilder and larger in scale. It is the festival highlight of the year with people converging from all over for this street event par excellence, when the entire city centre is given over to one massive party. Special club nights and parties are held both the night before, although to gain entry you'll need to book in advance either from the club itself or from selected record stores, such as Boudisque and Get Records. The actual day sees the city's streets and canals lined with people, most of whom are dressed in ridiculous costumes – not surprisingly, Queen's Day is one of the most flamboyant events on the gay calendar as well. Anything goes, especially if it's orange – the Dutch national colour. A fair is held on the Dam, and music blasts continuously from huge sound systems set up across most of the major squares. This is also the one day of the year when anything can be legally bought and sold to anyone by anyone on the streets. It's worth planning a trip

### Public holidays

Public holidays (*Nationale feestdagen*) provide the perfect excuse to take to the streets. The most celebrated of them all is Queen's Day – Koninginnedag – on April 30, which is celebrated with particular vim and gusto here in Amsterdam (see above).

**January 1** New Year's Day
**Good Friday** (although many shops open)
**Easter Sunday**
**Easter Monday**
**April 30** Queen's Day
**May 5** Liberation Day
**Ascension Day**
**Whit Sunday and Monday**
**December 25 and 26** Christmas

around, but you'll need to book your accommodation several months in advance.

**Herdenkingsdag (Remembrance Day)/ Bevrijdingsdag (Liberation Day)** May 4 and 5. There's a wreath-laying ceremony and two-minute silence at the National Monument in Dam Square, commemorating the Dutch dead of World War II, as well as a smaller event at the Homomonument in Westermarkt in honour of the country's gay soldiers who died. The next day the country celebrates the 1945 liberation from Nazi occupation with bands, speeches and impromptu markets around the city.

**Holland Festival** Throughout June ⓣ020/788 2100, ⓦwww.hollandfestival.nl. The largest music, dance and drama event in the Netherlands, aimed at making the dramatic arts more accessible. Showcasing around forty productions, from theatre and dance to music and opera, at venues around the city, it features a mix of established and new talent.

**Vondelpark Open Air Theatre** June–Aug Wed–Sun only ⓣ020/428 3360, ⓦwww.openluchttheater.nl. Free theatre, dance and music performances throughout the summer, showcasing anything from jazz and classical concerts through to stand-up comedy.

**Amsterdam Pride** First or second weekend in August ⓦwww.amsterdampride.nl. The city's gay community celebrates, with street parties and performances held along the Amstel, Warmoesstraat and Reguliersdwarsstraat. The Canal Parade takes place on the Saturday between 2 and 6pm; a flotilla of up to 75 boats cruising along the Prinsengracht watched by over 200,000 people.

**Grachtenfestival** Third week in August ⓣ020/421 4542, ⓦwww.grachtenfestival.nl. International musicians perform over ninety classical music events at historical locations around the three main canals, as well as the River IJ. Includes the Prinsengracht Concert, one of the world's most prestigious free open-air concerts, held opposite the *Pulitzer Hotel*.

**Uitmarkt** Last weekend in August ⓦwww.uitmarkt.nl. Where every cultural organization in the city, from opera to theatre, advertises its forthcoming programme of events with free preview performances held over three days around the Dam, Waterlooplein or Nieuwmarkt.

**Bloemencorso (Flower Parade)** First weekend in September. ⓦwww.bloemencorsoaalsmeer.nl. The three-day Aalsmeer–Amsterdam flower pageant in the city centre, celebrating every kind of flower except tulips, which are out of season. Each year has a different theme with each of the floats playing a different genre of music, from *chanson* to reggae. Vijzelstraat is the best place to see things, since the events in Dam Square are normally packed solid.

**Open Monument Day** First or second weekend in September ⓣ020/422 2118, ⓦwww.openmonumentendag.nl. For two days monuments throughout the Netherlands that are normally closed or have restricted opening times throw open their doors to the public for free.

**The Jordaan Festival** Second or third weekend in September ⓣ020/626 5587, ⓦwww.jordaanfestival.nl. A three-day street festival in the Jordaan. There's a commercial fair on Palmgracht, talent contests on Elandsgracht, a few street parties and a culinary fair on the Sunday afternoon at the Noordermarkt.

**Cannabis Cup** Late November ⓦwww.hightimes.com. Five-day harvest festival organized by *High Times* magazine with seminars, tours and music events held at the *Nachttheater Sugar Factory* (see p.84) and the *Melkweg* (see p.83), which also hosts a competition to find the best cultivated seed. Judging is open to the general public.

**Parade of Sint Nicolaas** Second or third Sunday in November. The traditional parade of *Sinterklaas* (Santa Claus) through the city on his white horse, starting from behind Centraal Station where he arrives by steam boat, before parading down the Damrak towards Rembrandtplein accompanied by his helpers the *Zwarte Pieten* ("Black Peters") – so called because of their blackened faces– who hand out sweets and little presents. It all finishes in Leidseplein on the balcony of the Stadsschouwburg.

**Pakjesavond (Present Evening)** Dec 5. Though it tends to be a private affair, Pakjesavond, rather than Christmas Day, is when Dutch kids receive their Christmas presents. If you're here on that day and have Dutch friends, it's worth knowing that it's traditional to give a present together with an amusing poem you have written caricaturing the recipient.

**New Year's Eve** Dec 31. New Year's Eve is big in Amsterdam, with fireworks and celebrations everywhere. Most bars and discos stay open until morning – make sure you get tickets in advance. This might just qualify as the wildest and most reckless street partying in Europe, but a word of warning: Amsterdammers seem to love the idea of throwing lit fireworks around and won't hesitate to send one careering into the crowd.

# Entertainment and nightlife

Although Amsterdam is not generally considered one of the world's major cultural centres, the quality and quantity of **music**, **dance** and **film** on offer are high – largely thanks to the government's long-term subsidy to the arts. For information about what's on, try the Amsterdam Uitburo, or AUB, the cultural office of the city council, which is housed in a corner of the Stadsschouwburg theatre on Leidseplein (Mon–Sat 10am–6pm, Thurs until 9pm, Sun noon–6pm). You can get advice here on anything remotely cultural, as well as tickets and copies of what listings magazines there are. Tickets for most performances can be bought at the Uitburo (for a €2 fee) and VVV offices, or reserved by phone through the AUB Uitlijn (☎0900/0191 at €0.40 per minute) for a one-percent booking fee, but the cheapest way to obtain tickets is to turn up at the venue itself.

## Music, dance and theatre

There's no shortage of classical music concerts in Amsterdam, with two major orchestras based in the city, plus regular visits by other Dutch orchestras. The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra remains one of the most dynamic in the world, and occupies one of the finest concert halls to boot, although the most prestigious venue at the moment is the brand-new Muziekgebouw, not far from Centraal Station in the Eastern Islands, which hosts regular classical music and opera as well as being the new location of the Bimhuis, the city's best jazz venue. There's also the Muziektheater (otherwise known as the Stopera) on Waterlooplein, which is home to the Netherlands Opera company as well as the National Ballet. Visiting companies sometimes perform here, but more often at the Stadsschouwburg and the Carré Theatre.

The most diverting multi-venue Dutch festival is the annual **Holland Festival** every June (see p.152). Otherwise, one of the more interesting music-oriented events is the piano recital held towards the end of August on a floating stage outside the *Pulitzer Hotel* on the Prinsengracht – with the whole area floodlit and filled with small boats, and every available spot on the banks and bridges taken up, this can be a wonderfully atmospheric evening.

Surprisingly for a city that functions so much in English, there is next to no English-language theatre to be seen in Amsterdam. A handful of part-time companies put on two or three English productions during the summer and there are also occasional performances by touring groups, but pickings are thin. Try *Boom Chicago* (see p.83) for great improv comedy.

See also Places chapters for more live music venues, such as *Paradiso* (p.84) and *Melkweg* (p.83).

**De Balie** Kleine Gartmanplantsoen 10 ☎020/553 5100, ⓦwww.balie.nl. A multimedia centre for culture and the arts, located off the Leidseplein, which often plays host to drama, debates, international symposia and the like, sometimes in conjunction with the *Paradiso* (see p.84) next door.

**Bimhuis** Piet Heinkade 3, east of Centraal Station ☎020/788 2188, ⓦwww.bimhuis.nl. In 2004 the city's premier jazz and improvised music venue moved to its spanking new building next to the Muziekgebouw (see p.154), featuring events from Dutch and international artists throughout the week, as well as jam sessions and workshops; there are free improv workshops on Tuesdays. There's also a

modern bar and restaurant for concert-goers with fantastic views over the water.

**Beurs van Berlage** Damrak 213 ⓣ020/521 7575 or 530 4141, ⓦwww.beursvanberlage.nl. The splendid interior of the former stock exchange (see also p.50) has been put to use as a venue for theatre and music, among other things, and there are regular concerts in its various impressive halls.

**Carré Theatre** Amstel 115–125 ⓣ0900/252 5255, ⓦwww.theatercarre.nl. A splendid hundred-year-old structure (originally built for a circus) which represents the ultimate venue for Dutch folk artists, and hosts all kinds of top international acts, anything from Swedish gospel to Carmen, with reputable touring orchestras and opera companies squeezed in between.

**Concertgebouw** Concertgebouwplein 2–6 ⓣ020/671 8345, ⓦwww.concertgebouw.nl. After a recent facelift, the Concertgebouw is now looking – and sounding – better than ever. There are two halls here and both boast a star-studded international programme. Prices are very reasonable, rarely over €35, and around €15 for Sunday-morning events. Free lunchtime concerts are held every Wednesday at 12.30pm. For more, see p.111.

**Cosmic Theater** Nes 75 ⓣ020/623 7324, ⓦwww.cosmictheater.nl. A modern dance and theatre company featuring young professionals with a multicultural background.

**Muziekgebouw** Piet Heinkade 1 ⓣ020/788 2000, ⓦwww.muziekgebouw.nl. This massive new development of two new medium-sized concert halls has given new impetus to the redevelopment going on alongside the IJ, as its top-quality programmes of opera and orchestral music draw a highbrow crowd to this part of town. Worth a visit for the building alone. The same development also includes the relocated Bimhuis (see p.153).

**Muziektheater** Amstel 3 ⓣ020/625 5455 or 551 8100, ⓦwww.muziektheater.nl. Part of the €150 million complex that includes the city hall. The theatre's resident companies, Netherlands Opera, and National Ballet offer the fullest, and most reasonably priced, programme of opera and dance in Amsterdam. Tickets go very quickly. See also p.95.

## Film

Most of Amsterdam's commercial **cinemas** are huge, multiplex picture palaces showing a selection of general releases. There's also a scattering of film houses (*filmhuizen*) showing revival and art films and occasional retrospectives. All foreign movies playing in Amsterdam (almost no Dutch movies turn up anyway) are shown in their original language and subtitled in Dutch.

As a guide, tickets can cost around €7 for an evening show Friday to Sunday, though it's not hard to find a ticket for €5 during the week. Amsterdam's only regular film event is the fascinating International Documentary Film Festival in November/December (info ⓣ020/627 3329, ⓦwww.idfa.nl), during which 200 documentaries from all over the world are shown in ten days.

**Cinecenter** Lijnbaansgracht 236 ⓣ020/623 6615, ⓦwww.cinecenter.nl. Opposite the *Melkweg*, this shows independent and quality commercial films, the majority originating from non-English-speaking countries. Shown with an interval.

**Filmmuseum** Vondelpark 3 ⓣ020/589 1400, ⓦwww.filmmuseum.nl. The Filmmuseum holds literally tens of thousands of prints, and although Dutch films show regularly, there are also regular screenings of all kinds of movies from all corners of the world. Silent movies often have live piano accompaniment, and on summer weekend evenings there are free open-air screenings on the terrace. Tickets €7–8. See also p.112.

**Kriterion** Roeterstraat 170 ⓣ020/623 1708, ⓦwww.kriterion.nl. Stylish duplex cinema close to Weesperplein metro that shows arthouse and quality commercial films, with late-night cult favourites. Friendly bar attached. Trams #6, #7 or #10.

**Melkweg** Lijnbaansgracht 234a ⓣ020/531 8181, ⓦwww.melkweg.nl. As well as music, art and dance (see p.83), the *Melkweg* manages to maintain a consistently good monthly film and video programme, ranging from mainstream fodder through to obscure imports.

**The Movies** Haarlemmerdijk 161 ⓣ020/624 5790, ⓦwww.themovies.nl. A beautiful Art Deco cinema, and a charming setting for independent films. Worth visiting for the bar and restaurant alone. "*Filmdiinner*" nights Mon–Thurs include a three-course meal plus film for €29. Late shows at the weekend.

## Clubs

**Clubbing** in Amsterdam used to be a relatively low-key affair, but in recent years the city has established itself as more of a clubbers' city, with a good array of decent venues that are just as style-conscious as those in other European capitals, as well as plenty of bars hosting regular DJs – most playing variations on house, trance, garage and techno.

Although all the places listed open at either 10pm or 11pm, there's not much point turning up anywhere before midnight; unless stated otherwise, everywhere stays open until 5am on Friday and Saturday nights, 4am on other nights. For reviews of individual venues, see the end of each Places chapter.

# Drugs

Thousands of visitors come to Amsterdam just to get stoned; in fact what most people don't realize is that all **soft drugs** – as well as hard – are technically illegal, it's just that possession and consumption have been partly decriminalized. Since 1976, the possession of small amounts of cannabis (up to 30g/1oz) has been ignored by the police, and sales have been tolerated to a selection of coffeeshops, where over-the-counter sales of cannabis are technically limited to 5g (under one-fifth of an ounce) per purchase. Outside of the coffeeshops, it's acceptable to smoke in some bars, but many are strongly against it so don't make any automatic assumptions. "Space cakes" (cakes baked with hashish and sold by the slice), although widely available, count as hard drugs and are illegal. And a word of warning: since all kinds of cannabis are so widely available in coffeeshops, there's no need to buy any on the street – if you do, you're asking for trouble. Needless to say, the one thing you shouldn't attempt to do is take cannabis out of the country – a surprising number of people think (or claim to think) that if it's bought in Amsterdam it can be taken back home legally. Customs officials and drug enforcement officers never believe this story.

# Directory

**Banks and exchange** Bank opening hours are Mon–Fri 9am–4pm (though many won't open until late-morning or lunchtime on Monday); closed public holidays. Bureaux de change are scattered around town – GWK has 24-hour branches at Centraal Station and Schiphol airport and offers competitive rates compared to the others. The VVV tourist office also changes money. For lost and stolen credit cards and travellers' cheques the relevant numbers are: American Express ⓣ020/504 8666 or 0800 022 0100; Mastercard ⓣ030/283 5555; Visa ⓣ020/660 0611.

**Consulates and embassies** Australia, Carnegielaan 4, The Hague ⓣ070/310 8200; Canada Sophialaan 7, The Hague ⓣ070/311 1600; New Zealand Carnegielaan 10, The Hague ⓣ070/346 9324; South Africa Wassenaarseweg 40, The Hague ⓣ070/392 4501; UK, Koningslaan 44, Amsterdam ⓣ020/676 4343; USA, Museumplein 19, Amsterdam ⓣ020/575 5309.

**Doctors/dentists** Your hotel or the VVV should be able to provide the address of an English-speaking doctor or dentist if you

need one. Otherwise call Central Doctors Service ⓣ020/592 3434 or ⓣ0900/503 204

**Electricity** 220v AC – effectively the same as British, although with round two- (or occasionally three-) pin plugs. British equipment will need either an adaptor or a new plug; American requires both a transformer and a new plug.

**Emergencies** Police, fire service and ambulance ⓣ112.

**Gay and Lesbian Amsterdam** Gay & Lesbian Switchboard ⓣ020/623 6565, ⓦwww.switchboard.nl (Mon–Fri noon–10pm, Sat & Sun 4–8pm). Amsterdam branch of the national gay and lesbian organization COC, Rozenstraat 14 ⓣ020/626 3087 (Mon–Fri 10am–5pm). For reviews of gay venues in the city, see the listings sections of each chapter.

**Hospitals** Academisch Medisch Centrum, Meibergdreef 9 ⓣ020/566 9191; Onze Lieve Vrouwe Gasthuis, 1e Oostenparkstraat 279 ⓣ020/599 9111; Sint Lucas Ziekenhuis Jan Tooropstraat 164 ⓣ020/510 8911.

**Internet** Amsterdam has a healthy supply of Internet cafés and most hotels provide Internet access for their guests for free or for a small charge; and many are beginning to install WiFi networks. A couple of central Internet cafés are: *EasyInternetcafé* (ⓦwww.easyeverything.com) at Damrak 33 (daily 9am–10pm); and *Internetcafe* at Martelaarsgracht 11 (daily 9am–1am, Fri & Sat until 3am; ⓣ020/627 1052, ⓦwww.internetcafe.nl), just 200m from Centraal Station and serving alcoholic drinks as well as the usual juice and coffee. Reasonable rates – €1 per hour, including a drink.

**Left luggage** Centraal Station has both coin-operated luggage lockers (daily 7am–11pm) and a staffed left-luggage office (daily 7am–11pm). Small coin-operated lockers cost €3.70, the larger ones €5.90 per 24 hours.

**Lost property** For items lost on the trams, buses or metro, contact GVB Head Office, Prins Hendrikkade 108–114 (Mon–Fri 9am–4pm; ⓣ020/460 5858). For property lost on a train, go to the Gevonden Voorwerpen office at the nearest station; Amsterdam's is at Centraal Station, near the left-luggage lockers (ⓣ020/557 8544).

**Pharmacies** You'll need an *apotheek* (usually Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, but may be closed Mon mornings) for minor ailments or to get a prescription filled. A complete list – with many opening hours – can be found in the city's yellow pages under "Apotheken". Most of the better hotels will be able to assist too.

**Police** There are city centre police stations at Elandsgracht 115, Beurrstraat 33, NZ Voorburgwal 104, Lijnbaansgracht 219 and Marnixstraat 148. Or call ⓣ0900/8844 if it's not an emergency.

**Post** Post offices are open Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, with larger ones also open Sat 9am–noon. The main post office (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm, Thurs until 8pm, Sat 10am–1.30pm; ⓣ020/556 3311) is at Singel 250, on the corner with Raadhuisstraat. Stamps are sold at a wide range of outlets including many shops and hotels. Post boxes are everywhere, but be sure to use the correct slot – the one labelled *overige* is for post going outside the immediate locality.

**Telephones** Phonecards can be bought at many outlets, including post offices, tobacconists and VVV offices, and in several denominations, beginning at €5. Phone boxes are provided by different companies and their respective phone cards are not mutually compatible. KPN phones (and cards) are the most common. The cheap-rate period for international calls is between 8pm and 8am during the week and all day at weekends. Numbers prefixed ⓣ0800 are free, while those prefixed ⓣ0900 are premium-rated; a (Dutch) message before you're connected tells you how much you will be paying for the call. **Useful phone numbers**: Operator (domestic and international) ⓣ0800 0410; Directory enquiries: domestic ⓣ0900 8008; international ⓣ0900 8418.

**Time difference** The Netherlands is one hour behind UK time and 6 hours behind EST in the USA.

**Tipping** There's no necessity to tip in The Netherlands, although it's customary to round your payment up to the nearest euro – or on larger bills, the nearest €5.

**Yellow pages** The city's yellow pages are online at ⓦwww.goudengids.nl.

# Chronology

# Amsterdam chronology

**Thirteenth century** ▸ The insignificant fishing village of Amsterdam is transformed when the local feudal lord decides to build a castle here; thereafter, Amsterdam begins to prosper as a trading centre and transit port for Baltic grain.

**Fourteenth century** ▸ Amsterdam booms and its trade diversifies.

**1425** ▸ Digging of the Singel, Amsterdam's first horseshoe-shaped canal.

**1517** ▸ Martin Luther produces his 95 theses against the Catholic Church's practice of indulgences, a prelude to his more comprehensive assault on the entire institution.

**1530s** ▸ Inspired by Luther and subsequently Calvin, Protestantism takes root amongst the apprentices and burghers of Amsterdam.

**1555** ▸ The fanatically Catholic Habsburg Philip II becomes king of Spain and ruler of the Low Countries, including Amsterdam.

**1559** ▸ Philip passes control of the Low Countries to his sister, Margaret of Parma, whose headquarters is in Brussels. Margaret persecutes her Protestant subjects.

**1566** ▸ The Protestants strike back in the Iconoclastic Fury, purging hundreds of churches of their "papist" reliquaries and shrines – hence the plain, whitewashed interiors of many of the city's churches today.

**1567** ▸ Philip dispatches an army of ten thousand men to the Low Countries to suppress his religious opponents, engulfing the region in war; the pre-eminent Protestant leader is William the Silent, Prince William of Orange-Nassau.

**1578** ▸ Amsterdam deserts the Spanish cause and declares for William.

**1579** ▸ The seven northern provinces of the Low Countries sign the Union of Utrecht, an alliance against Spain that is the first unification of the Netherlands as an identifiable country.

**Seventeenth century** ▸ The Golden Age. Amsterdam becomes the emporium for the products of northern and southern Europe as well as the East and West Indies. The city also makes huge profits from its fleet of cargo-carrying merchant ships, and by the middle of the century Amsterdam's wealth is spectacular. This economic boom attracts immigrants from all over Europe, and to accommodate its burgeoning population the city expands on several occasions.

**1602** ▸ Establishment of the East India Company, the VOC, which soon develops immensely lucrative trading links between the city and the east, primarily with what is now Indonesia.

**1613** ▸ The grandest and most elaborate enlargement of

Amsterdam begins with the digging of the western stretches of the Herengracht, Keizersgracht and Prinsengracht, the three great canals of the Grachtengordel ("girdle of canals").

**1621** ▸ Foundation of the West India Company, the WIC.

**1631** ▸ Rembrandt (1606–69) moves to Amsterdam, where he becomes a leading light amongst the city's painters; he completes his most famous painting, *the Night Watch*, in 1642.

**1648** ▸ Peace with Spain; Dutch independence is recognized.

**1672** ▸ William III of Orange becomes ruler of the United Provinces ultimately to the detriment of Amsterdam's independent position.

**1689** ▸ William III of Orange becomes king of England, Scotland and Wales.

**1756–63** ▸ The Seven Years' War traumatizes much of Europe, but the Netherlands stays neutral and Amsterdam's bankers make a killing by loaning money to just about everyone.

**1787** ▸ The oligarchy that has long dominated Amsterdam comes under attack and there is rioting before the Orangists (supporters of the House of Orange) secure municipal control.

**1795** ▸ The French army occupies the United Provinces, establishing the Batavian Republic in its stead. Many of the Dutch elite's privileges are removed and the country becomes part of Napoleon's short-lived empire.

**1814** ▸ After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, under the terms of the Congress of Vienna, Frederick William of Orange-Nassau is crowned King William I of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, incorporating the United Provinces and the former Spanish Netherlands. The seat of government becomes Den Haag (The Hague).

**1830** ▸ The provinces of what had been the Spanish Netherlands revolt against Frederick William and establish the separate Kingdom of Belgium.

**1870s** ▸ Amsterdam bursts its medieval boundaries, spreading across the surrounding flatlands at a rate of knots.

**1876** ▸ The digging of the Noordzeekanaal and the expansion of the city's docks greatly improves Amsterdam's position as a major port.

**1889** ▸ Centraal Station is completed, connecting the city to the Dutch rail network.

**1911** ▸ The Dutch parliament passes its first legislation on prostitution. Brothels and the trafficking of women are prohibited, but not prostitution itself.

**1914–18** ▸ The Netherlands remains neutral during World War I.

**1915–1930** ▸ The Amsterdam School of Dutch expressionist architects makes its mark on the city, designing new housing estates, like Het Schip, and suburbs, primarily Nieuw Zuid (New South).

**1928** ▸ Amsterdam hosts the Olympic Games.

**1932** ▸ The Afsluitdijk, connecting North Holland with Friesland, is completed, bringing the country's northern coast within easy striking distance of Amsterdam and turning the saltwater Zuider Zee into the freshwater IJsselmeer.

**1940** ▸ In World War II, the Germans invade and overrun the Netherlands in quick time.

**1941** ▸ The Germans start rounding up and deporting the city's Jews in earnest.

**1942** ▸ Anne Frank plus family and friends hide away in the back annexe of her father's business premises on the Prinsengracht.

**1944** ▸ Betrayal and capture of the Franks; Anne subsequently dies in Belsen concentration camp, but her father – Otto – is to survive the war.

**May 1945** ▸ The Allies liberate Amsterdam.

**1947** ▸ Otto Frank publishes his daughter's diary; Johan Cruyff, perhaps the world's greatest footballer, is born in the Jordaan.

**1949** ▸ After a disgraceful colonial war, the Dutch finally bow to the inevitable and withdraw their troops from Indonesia, which becomes an independent country.

**1953** ▸ The North Sea breaches the country's sea defenses, drowning over 1800 people. The Dutch respond with the Delta Project, whose massive sea dykes will, by the late 1970s, provide extra protection for the cities to the south of Amsterdam.

**1960s** ▸ The radical mass movements that sweep through the West transform Amsterdam from a middling, rather conservative city into a turbo-charged hotbed of hippy action.

**1963** ▸ Jasper Grootveld, one-time window cleaner and magician extraordinaire, makes a real splash with his anti-consumer performances. Hundreds gather on the Spui to watch him and some go on to form the Provos – short for *provocatie* ("provocation") – a Left-wing-cum-anarchist movement, whose street "happenings" prove fantastically popular with young Amsterdammers.

**1965** ▸ The police intervene at a Saturday night "happening" and precipitate a riot; this sets a pattern for a string of further confrontations.

**1966** ▸ Despite widespread opposition, Princess Beatrix marries Claus von Amsberg, a German who had served in Hitler's army; after the wedding, rioting convulses much of the city.

**1967** ▸ The Provos dissolve themselves, but many of their supporters move on to neighbourhood committees, set up to oppose the more outlandish development plans of the city council. This marks the beginning of the squatter movement.

**1970s** ▸ The legislation of 1911 had accepted (the inevitability of) prostitution, but in the 1970s the city council moves from passive to active tolerance, stipulating – for example – the number of window brothels permitted in the city. Brothels remain illegal.

**1975** ▸ Completion of the Markerwaarddijk, the dyke linking

Enkhuizen in North Holland with Lelystad in the province of Flevoland; this creates a new freshwater lake, the Markermeer.

**1976** ▸ The Netherlands decriminalizes (but does not legalize) the possession of soft drugs, principally cannabis. The first dope-selling "coffeeshops" open.

**Late 1970s** ▸ Fuelled by the city council's apparent inability to deal with the housing shortage, the squatter movement goes from strength to strength.

**1980** ▸ Police attempt to evict squatters from a Vondelstraat squat, provoking a riot. Other forced evictions set off further rioting and there are yet more disturbances on the coronation day of Queen Beatrix with protesters objecting to the lavishness of the proceedings.

**1984** The squatting movement, which now has no less than ten thousand activists, has a series of major show-downs with the police. On each occasion, forced eviction precedes mass rioting.

**Late 1980s** The squatter movement fades away.

**1990s** ▸ With the city's radicals on the back-foot, the city council pursues a more business-friendly agenda. Several huge redevelopment schemes are approved, most notably amongst the old docklands bordering the River IJ.

**2000** ▸ The Dutch parliament repeals the laws prohibiting brothels.

**2001** ▸ The Netherlands becomes the first country in the world to recognize gay marriages.

**2002** ▸ A brand-new Rightist political party – Leefbaar Neederlands (Liveable Netherlands) – secures seventeen percent of the national vote in the general election, giving the country's political class a tremendous shock. The new party is led by a skilled populist Pim Fortuyn, but just a few days before the election he is assassinated.

**2003** ▸ After the death of Fortuyn, Leefbaar Neederlands unravels and loses most of its seats in January's general election. Normal political service is apparently resumed, but Fortuyn's success has pushed certain sorts of social debate, particularly on immigration, to the right.

**November 2, 2004** ▸ The controversial filmmaker Theo van Gogh is shot dead on an Amsterdam street by Mohammed Bouyeri, an Amsterdammer by birth and Moroccan by descent, who is enraged by Van Gogh's cinematic treatment of Islam. Across the country, race relations become tenser.

**2005–6** ▸ At a time when the country needs clear political leadership, the Rightist coalition that has a majority in the national parliament proves markedly unstable. Immigration in particular and race relations in general remain big issues. Meanwhile, in Amsterdam at least, the developers are on a roll.

# Language

# Dutch

**It's unlikely that you'll need to speak anything other than English while you're in Amsterdam; the Dutch have a seemingly natural talent for languages, and your attempts at speaking theirs may be met with some bewilderment – though this can have as much to do with your pronunciation (Dutch is very difficult to get right) as their surprise that you're making an effort. Outside Amsterdam, people aren't quite as cosmopolitan, but even so the following Dutch words and phrases should be the most you'll need to get by. We've also included a basic food and drink glossary, though menus are nearly always multilingual, and where they aren't, ask and one will almost invariably appear.**

## Pronunciation

Dutch is pronounced much the same as English. However, there are a few Dutch sounds that don't exist in English, which can be difficult to pronounce without practice.

**v** like the English f in **f**ar
**w** like the v in **v**at
**j** like the initial sound of **y**ellow
**ch** and **g** are considerably harder than in English, enunciated much further back in the throat
**ng** is as in bri**ng**
**nj** as in o**ni**o**n**
**a** is like the English **a**pple
**aa** like c**a**rt
**e** like l**e**t
**ee** like l**a**te
**o** as in p**o**p
**oo** in p**o**pe
**u** is like the French t**u** if preceded by a consonant; it's like w**oo**d if followed by a consonant
**uu** the French t**u**
**au** and **ou** like h**ow**
**ei** and **ij** as in f**i**ne
**oe** as in s**oo**n
**eu** is like the diphthong in the French l**eu**r
**ui** is the hardest Dutch diphthong of all, pronounced like h**ow** but much further forward in the mouth, with lips pursed (as if to say "oo")

## Words and phrases

### Basics and greetings

| | |
|---|---|
| **yes** | ja |
| **no** | nee |
| **please** | alstublieft |
| **(no) thank you** | (nee) dank u *or* bedankt |
| **hello** | hallo or dag |
| **good morning** | goedemorgen |
| **good afternoon** | goedemiddag |
| **good evening** | goedenavond |
| **goodbye** | tot ziens |
| **see you later** | tot straks |
| **do you speak English?** | spreekt u Engels? |
| **I don't understand** | Ik begrijp het niet |
| **women/men** | vrouwen/mannen |
| **children** | kinderen |
| **push/pull** | duwen/trekken |

## Getting around

| | |
|---|---|
| **how do I get to… ?** | hoe kom ik in… ? |
| **where is… ?** | waar is… ? |
| **how far is it to… ?** | hoe ver is het naar… ? |
| **when?** | wanneer? |
| **far/near** | ver/dichtbij |
| **left/right** | links/rechts |
| **straight ahead** | rechtuit gaan |
| **here/there** | hier/daar |

## Ordering, shopping and money

| | |
|---|---|
| **I want…** | Ik wil… |
| **I don't want…** | Ik wil niet… (+verb)<br>Ik wil geen… (+noun) |
| **how much is… ?** | wat kost… ? |
| **post office** | postkantoor |
| **stamp(s)** | postzegel(s) |
| **money exchange** | geldwisselkantoor |
| **cash desk** | kassa |
| **good/bad** | goed/slecht |
| **big/small** | groot/klein |
| **new/old** | nieuw/oud |
| **cheap/expensive** | goedkoop/duur |
| **hot/cold** | heet or warm/koud |
| **with/without** | met/zonder |

## Days of the week

| | |
|---|---|
| **Monday** | Maandag |
| **Tuesday** | Dinsdag |
| **Wednesday** | Woensdag |
| **Thursday** | Donderdag |
| **Friday** | Vrijdag |
| **Saturday** | Zaterdag |
| **Sunday** | Zondag |
| **yesterday** | gisteren |
| **today** | vandaag |
| **tomorrow** | morgen |
| **tomorrow morning** | morgenochtend |

| | |
|---|---|
| **year** | jaar |
| **month** | maand |
| **week** | week |
| **day** | dag |

## Numbers

| | |
|---|---|
| **0** | nul |
| **1** | een |
| **2** | twee |
| **3** | drie |
| **4** | vier |
| **5** | vijf |
| **6** | zes |
| **7** | zeven |
| **8** | acht |
| **9** | negen |
| **10** | tien |
| **11** | elf |
| **12** | twaalf |
| **13** | dertien |
| **14** | veertien |
| **15** | vijftien |
| **16** | zestien |
| **17** | zeventien |
| **18** | achttien |
| **19** | negentien |
| **20** | twintig |
| **21** | een en twintig |
| **22** | twee en twintig |
| **30** | dertig |
| **40** | veertig |
| **50** | vijftig |
| **60** | zestig |
| **70** | zeventig |
| **80** | tachtig |
| **90** | negentig |
| **100** | honderd |
| **101** | honderd een |
| **200** | twee honderd |
| **201** | twee honderd een |
| **500** | vijf honderd |
| **1000** | duizend |

# Food and drink terms

## Basics

| | |
|---|---|
| **boter** | butter |
| **boterham/broodje** | sandwich/roll |
| **brood** | bread |
| **dranken** | drinks |
| **eieren** | eggs |
| **gerst** | barley |
| **groenten** | vegetables |
| **honing** | honey |
| **hoofdgerechten** | main courses |
| **kaas** | cheese |
| **koud** | cold |
| **nagerechten** | desserts |
| **peper** | pepper |
| **pindakaas** | peanut butter |

| | |
|---|---|
| **sla/salade** | salad |
| **smeerkaas** | cheese spread |
| **stokbrood** | French bread |
| **suiker** | sugar |
| **vis** | fish |
| **vlees** | meat |
| **voorgerechten** | starters/hors d'oeuvres |
| **vruchten** | fruit |
| **warm** | hot |
| **zout** | salt |

## Snacks

| | |
|---|---|
| **erwtensoep/snert** | thick pea soup with bacon or sausage |
| **huzarensalade** | potato salad with pickles |
| **Kkoffietafel** | a light midday meal of cold meats, cheese, bread and perhaps soup |
| **patates/frites** | chips/French fries |
| **soep** | soup |
| **uitsmijter** | ham or cheese with eggs on bread |

## Meat and poultry

| | |
|---|---|
| **biefstuk (hollandse)** | steak |
| **biefstuk (duitse)** | hamburger |
| **eend** | duck |
| **fricandeau** | roast pork |
| **fricandel** | frankfurter-like sausage |
| **gehakt** | minced meat |
| **ham** | ham |
| **kalfsvlees** | veal |
| **kalkoen** | turkey |
| **karbonade** | chop |
| **kip** | chicken |
| **kroket** | spiced veal or beef in hash, coated in breadcrumbs |
| **lamsvlees** | lamb |
| **lever** | liver |
| **rookvlees** | smoked beef |
| **spek** | bacon |
| **worst** | sausages |

## Fish

| | |
|---|---|
| **forel** | trout |
| **garnalen** | prawns |
| **haring** | herring |
| **haringsalade** | herring salad |
| **kabeljauw** | cod |
| **makreel** | mackerel |
| **mosselen** | mussels |
| **oesters** | oysters |
| **paling** | eel |
| **schelvis** | haddock |
| **schol** | plaice |
| **tong** | sole |
| **zalm** | salmon |

## Vegetables

| | |
|---|---|
| **aardappelen** | potatoes |
| **bloemkool** | cauliflower |
| **bonen** | beans |
| **champignons** | mushrooms |
| **erwten** | peas |
| **hutspot** | mashed potatoes and carrots |
| **knoflook** | garlic |
| **komkommer** | cucumber |
| **prei** | leek |
| **rijst** | rice |
| **sla** | salad, lettuce |
| **stampot andijvie** | mashed potato and endive |
| **stampot boerenkool** | mashed potato and cabbage |
| **uien** | onions |
| **wortelen** | carrots |
| **zuurkool** | sauerkraut |

## Cooking terms

| | |
|---|---|
| **belegd** | filled or topped, as in *belegde broodjes* – bread rolls topped with cheese, etc |
| **doorbakken** | well-done |
| **gebakken** | fried/baked |
| **gebraden** | roasted |
| **gegrild** | grilled |
| **gekookt** | boiled |
| **geraspt** | grated |
| **gerookt** | smoked |
| **gestoofd** | stewed |
| **half doorbakken** | medium-done |
| **hollandse saus** | hollandaise (a milk and egg sauce) |
| **rood** | rare |

## Indonesian dishes and terms

| | |
|---|---|
| **ajam** | chicken |
| **bami** | noodles with meat/ |

| | |
|---|---|
| | chicken and vegetables |
| **daging** | beef |
| **gado gado** | vegetables in peanut sauce |
| **goreng** | fried |
| **ikan** | fish |
| **katjang** | peanut |
| **kroepoek** | prawn crackers |
| **loempia** | spring rolls |
| **nasi** | rice |
| **nasi goreng** | fried rice with meat/chicken and vegetables |
| **nasi rames** | *rijsttafel* on a single plate |
| **pedis** | hot and spicy |
| **pisang** | banana |
| **rijsttafel** | collection of different spicy dishes served with plain rice |
| **sambal** | hot, chilli-based sauce |
| **satesaus** | peanut sauce to accompany meat grilled on skewers |
| **seroendeng** | spicy shredded and fried coconut |
| **tauge** | bean sprouts |

## Sweets and desserts

| | |
|---|---|
| **appelgebak** | apple tart or cake |
| **drop** | Dutch liquorice, available in *zoet* (sweet) or *zout* (salted) varieties – the latter an acquired taste |
| **gebak** | pastry |
| **IJs** | ice cream |
| **koekjes** | biscuits |
| **oliebollen** | doughnuts |
| **pannekoeken** | pancakes |
| **pepernoten** | Dutch ginger nuts |
| **poffertjes** | small pancakes, fritters |
| **(slag)room** | (whipped) cream |
| **speculaas** | spice and honey-flavoured biscuit |
| **stroopwafels** | waffles |
| **taai-taai** | Dutch honey cake |
| **vla** | custard |

## Fruits and nuts

| | |
|---|---|
| **aardbei** | strawberry |
| **amandel** | almond |
| **appel** | apple |
| **appelmoes** | apple purée |
| **citroen** | lemon |
| **druiven** | grape |
| **framboos** | raspberry |
| **hazelnoot** | hazelnut |
| **kers** | cherry |
| **kokosnoot** | coconut |
| **peer** | pear |
| **perzik** | peach |
| **pinda** | peanut |
| **pruim** | plum/prune |

## Drinks

| | |
|---|---|
| **bessenjenever** | blackcurrant gin |
| **citroenjenever** | lemon gin |
| **droog** | dry |
| **frisdranken** | soft drinks |
| **jenever** | Dutch gin |
| **karnemelk** | buttermilk |
| **koffie** | coffee |
| **koffie verkeerd** | coffee with warm milk |
| **kopstoot** | beer with a jenever chaser |
| **melk** | milk |
| **met ijs** | with ice |
| **met slagroom** | with whipped cream |
| **pils** | Dutch beer |
| **proost!** | cheers! |
| **sinaasappelsap** | orange juice |
| **thee** | tea |
| **tomatensap** | tomato juice |
| **vruchtensap** | fruit juice |
| **wijn (wit/rood/rosé)** | wine (white/red/rosé) |
| **vieux** | Dutch brandy |
| **zoet** | sweet |

# small print & Index

## A Rough Guide to Rough Guides

In 1981, Mark Ellingham, a recent graduate in English from Bristol University, was travelling in Greece on a tiny budget and couldn't find the right guidebook. With a group of friends he wrote his own guide, combining a contemporary, journalistic style with a practical approach to travellers' needs. That first Rough Guide was a student scheme that became a publishing phenomenon. Today, Rough Guides include recommendations from shoestring to luxury and cover hundreds of destinations around the globe, including almost every country in the Americas and Europe, more than half of Africa and most of Asia and Australasia. Millions of readers relish Rough Guides' wit and inquisitiveness as much as their enthusiastic, critical approach and value-for-money ethos. The guides' ever-growing team of authors and photographers is spread all over the world.

In the early 1990s, Rough Guides branched out of travel, with the publication of Rough Guides to World Music, Classical Music and the Internet. All three have become benchmark titles in their fields, spearheading the publication of a range of more than 350 titles under the Rough Guide name, including phrasebooks, waterproof maps, music guides from Opera to Heavy Metal, reference works as diverse as Conspiracy Theories and Shakespeare, and popular culture books from iPods to Poker. Rough Guides also produce a series of more than 120 World Music CDs in partnership with World Music Network.

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## Help us update

We've gone to a lot of effort to ensure that the second edition of **Amsterdam DIRECTIONS** is accurate and up-to-date. However, things change – places get "discovered", opening hours are notoriously fickle, restaurants and rooms raise prices or lower standards. If you feel we've got it wrong or left something out, we'd like to know, and if you can remember the address, the price, the phone number, so much the better.

We'll credit all contributions, and send a copy of the next edition (or any other DIRECTIONS guide or Rough Guide if you prefer) for the best letters. Everyone who writes to us and isn't already a subscriber will receive a copy of our full-colour thrice-yearly newsletter. Please mark letters: "**Amsterdam DIRECTIONS Update**" and send to: Rough Guides, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, or Rough Guides, 4th Floor, 345 Hudson St, New York, NY 10014. Or send an email to **mail@roughguides.com**

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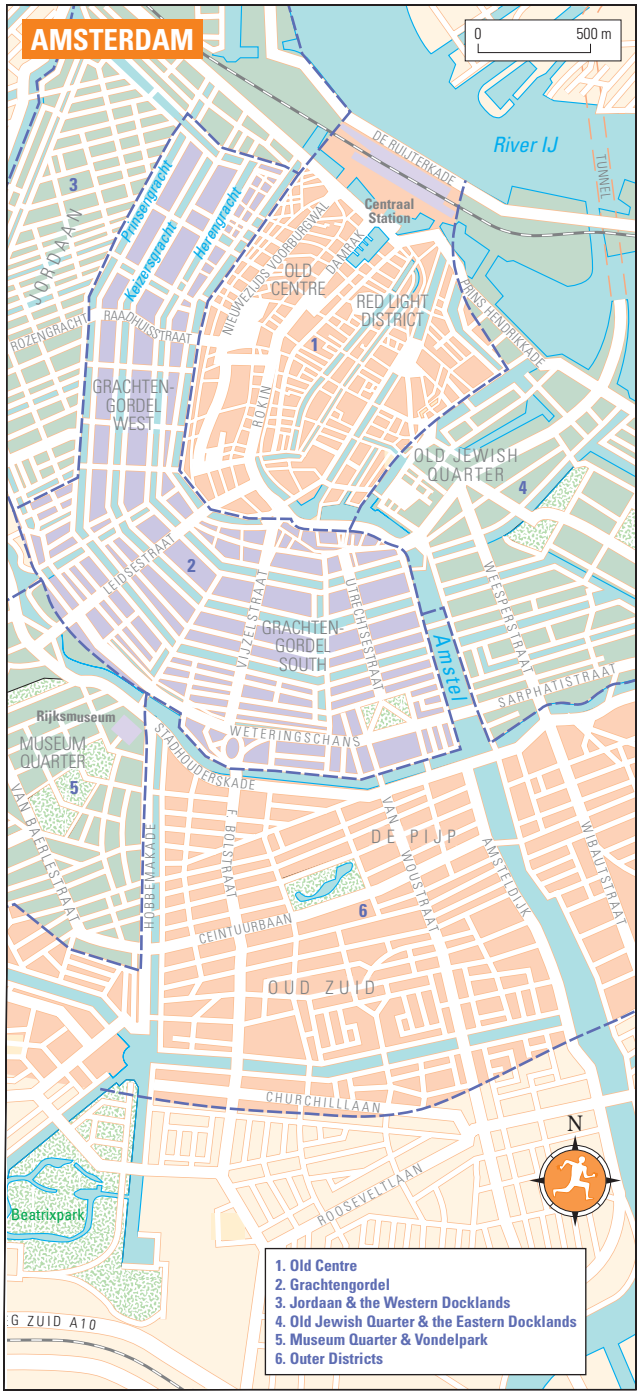
AMSTERDAM
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River IJ
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Centraal Station
OLD CENTRE
RED LIGHT DISTRICT
DAMRAK
PRINS HENDRIKKADE
NIEUWEZIJDS VOORBURGWAL
ROKIN
RAADHUISSTRAAT
ROZENGRACHT
Prinsengracht
Keizersgracht
Herengracht
VORDAAN
3
GRACHTEN-GORDEL WEST
1
OLD JEWISH QUARTER
4
LEIDSESTRAAT
2
VIJZELSTRAAT
UTRECHTSESTRAAT
GRACHTEN-GORDEL SOUTH
Amstel
WESPERSTRAAT
SARPHATISTRAAT
Rijksmuseum
MUSEUM QUARTER
5
WETERINGSCHANS
STADHOUDERSKADE
VAN BAERLESTRAAT
HOBBEMAKADE
FOKKERSTRAAT
DE PIJP
VAN WOUSTRAAT
AMSTELDIJK
WIBAUTSTRAAT
CEINTUURBAAN
6
OUD ZUID
CHURCHILLLAAN
ROOSEVELTLAAN
N
Beatrixpark
G ZUID A10
1. Old Centre
2. Grachtengordel
3. Jordaan & the Western Docklands
4. Old Jewish Quarter & the Eastern Docklands
5. Museum Quarter & Vondelpark
6. Outer Districts

# AMSTERDAM CITY CENTRE

NOORD
N
JORDAAN
Noorderkerk
Karthuizerhofje
Pianola Museum
Hofje Van Brienen
GRACHTENGORDEL WEST
Anne Frank Huis
Westerkerk
Theater-museum
Stedelijk Museum Bureau
Nieuwe Kerk
Koninklijk Paleis
OLD CENTRE
De Bijenkorf
Oude Kerk
Beurs van Berlage
RED LIGHT DISTRICT
Oostindisch Huis
Zuiderkerk
Nieuwmarkt
Het Rembrandt-huis
Holland Experience
OLD JEWISH QUARTER
Gassan
Montelbaan-toren
Dutch East India Compound
Bijbels Museum
Flower Market
De Appel
Museum Willet-Holthuysen
Muziek-theater
Esnoga
Joods Historisch Museum
Waterlooplein
Hortus Botanicus
Verzets-museum
Artis Zoo
Hollandsche Schouwburg
PLANTAGEBUURT
Melkweg
Stadsschouwburg
American Hotel
GRACHTENGORDEL SOUTH
Van Loon Museum
Amstelsluizen
OOST
Muiderpoort
Tropenmuseum
Vondelpark
Rijksmuseum
Van Gogh Museum
MUSEUM QUARTER
Heineken Experience
DE PIJP
Frederiks Plein
Weesperplein
Oosterpark
Passenger Ferries
Centraal Station & Tourist Office
GVB
Centraal Station
St Nicolaaskerk
Luthersekerk
Stedelijk Museum
Scheepvaarthuis
NEMO
Nederlands Scheepvaart-museum
Muziekgebouw
River IJ
Java Island
OOSTERDOK
Oosterdok
IJ TUNNEL
Damrak
Rokin
Kalverstraat
Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal
Prinsengracht
Keizersgracht
Herengracht
Singel
Amstel
River
Lijnbaansgracht
Weteringschans
Singelgracht
Brouwersgracht
Haarlemmerstraat
Nieuwe Westerdokstraat
De Ruijterkade
Open Havenfront
Prins Hendrikkade
Oosterdokskade
Piet Heinkade
Dijksgracht
Binnenkant
Oude Waal
Kattenburgergracht
Nieuwevaart
Kattenburgervaart
Entrepotdok
Plantage Doklaan
Plantage Middenlaan
Plantage Muidergracht
Nieuwe Keizersgracht
Nieuwe Prinsengracht
Nieuwe Achtergracht
Nieuwe Herengracht
Nieuwe Leliestraat
Nieuwe Spiegelstraat
Nieuwe Looierstraat
Nieuwe Uilenburgerstraat
Nieuwe Vaart
Nieuwmarkt
Waterlooplein
Frederiksplein
Singelgracht
Stadhouderskade
Hobbemakade
Museumplein
Leidseplein
Leidsestraat
Leidsegracht
Reguliersdwarsstraat
Reguliersgracht
Utrechtsestraat
Kerkstraat
Vijzelstraat
Vijzelgracht
Amstelstraat
Rembrandtplein
Muiderstraat
Plantage
Artis
Entrepotdok
Oosterpark
Wibautstraat
Weesperstraat
Weesperzijde
Amsteldijk
Sarphatikade
Sarphatistraat
Mauritskade
Valkenierstraat
Spinozahof
Spinozastraat
Roetersstraat
Andreas Boerhaavestraat
Boerhaave-plein
Bonnstraat
Tilanusstraat
Ruyschstraat
Blasiusstraat
's Gravesandestraat
Swammerdamstraat
Hemonylaan
Nicolaas Witsenkade
Den Texstraat
Nonthorststraat
2e Jacob van Campenstraat
Zandpad
Vossiusstraat
Schapenburgerpad
Pieter Cornelisz Hooftstraat
Jan Luijkenstraat
Paulus Potterstraat
Hobbemastraat
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2e Weteringdwarsstraat
Noorderstraat
Fokke Simonszstraat
Ziesenisgracht
Wetteringschans
Korte Leidsewarsstraat
Lange Leidsewarsstraat
Prinsengracht
Passeerdersstraat
Looiersgracht
Elandsstraat
Laurierstraat
Rozengracht
Bloemgracht
Egelantiersgracht
Egelantiersstraat
Tuinstraat
Anjeliersstraat
Westerstraat
Lindengracht
Goudsbloemstraat
Willemsstraat
Palmstr.
Nassaukade
Singelgracht
Marnixkade
Marnixstraat
Lijnbaansgracht
Noorderkerkstraat
Boomstraat
2e Boomdwarsstraat
Westermarkt
Westerstraat
Raadhuisstraat
Dam
Damstraat
Spuistraat
Oudezijds Voorburgwal
Oudezijds Achterburgwal
Warmoesstraat
Achterburgwal
Kloveniersburgwal
Oudeschans
Kromme Waal
Recht Boomssloot
Prins Hendrikkade
Kalkmarkt
Foeliestraat
N. Foeliestraat
Nieuwe Uilenburgerstraat
Anne Frankstraat
Joodenbreestr.
Jodenbreestraat
Sint Antoniesbreestraat
Zeedijk
Geldersekade
Nieuwendijk
Langestraat
Haarlemmerpoortsteeg
Haarlemmerhoutstraat
Haarlemmerstraat
Brouwersgracht
Singel
Herengracht
Keizersgracht
Prinsengracht
Damrak
Rokin
Kalverstraat
Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal
Oudezijds Voorburgwal
Oudezijds Achterburgwal
Spuistraat
Singel
Herengracht
Keizersgracht
Prinsengracht
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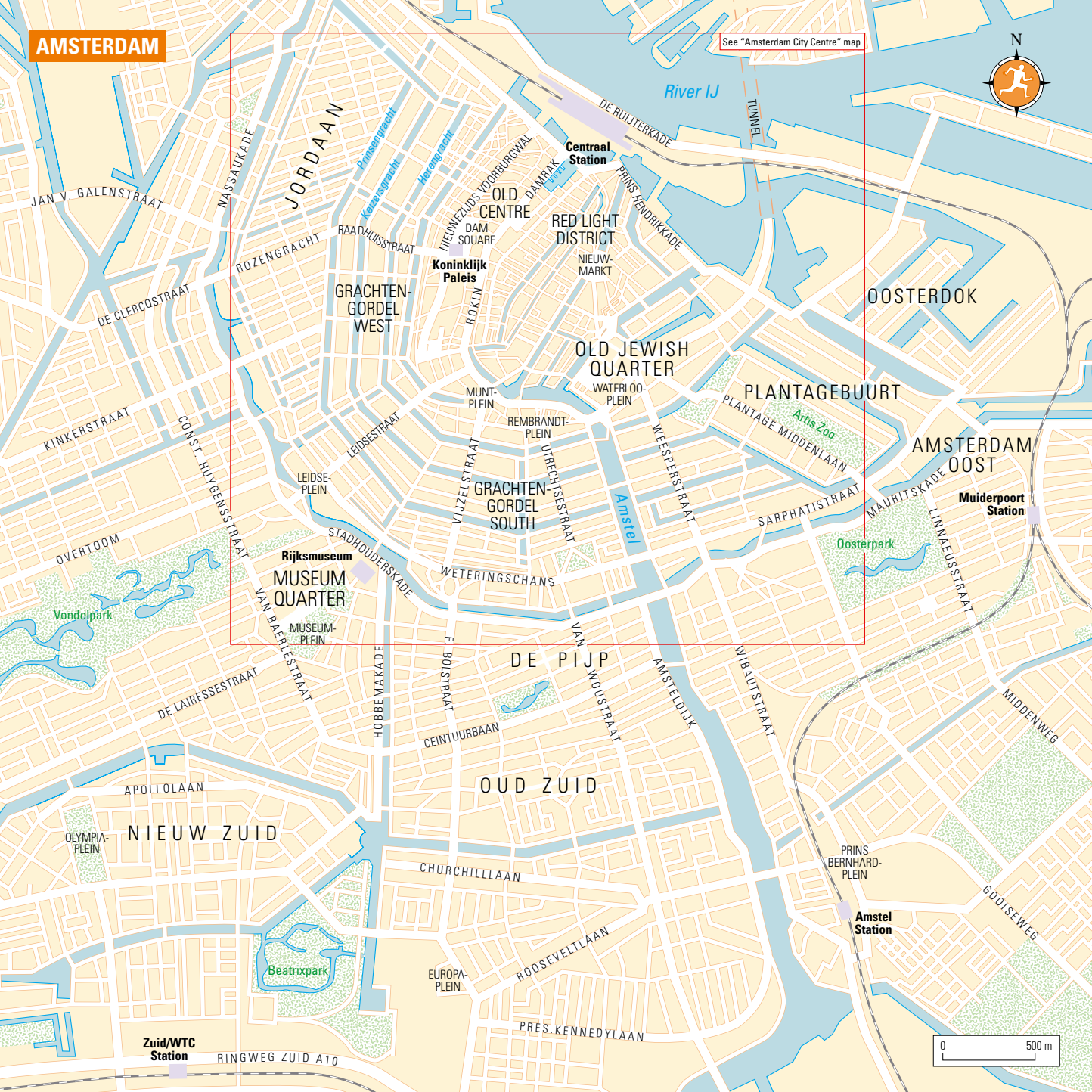
Vijzelstraat
Vijzelgracht
Reguliersgracht
Reguliersdwarsstraat
Utrechtsestraat


AMSTERDAM
See "Amsterdam City Centre" map
N
River IJ
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TUNNEL
Centraal Station
PRINS HENDRIKKADE
DAMRAK
OLD CENTRE
DAM SQUARE
RED LIGHT DISTRICT
NIEUWEZIJDS VOORBURGWAL
NIEUW-MARKT
Koninklijk Paleis
RAADHUISSTRAAT
ROZENGRACHT
JAN V. GALENSTRAAT
NASSAUKADE
JORDAAN
Prinsengracht
Keizersgracht
Herengracht
DE CLERCQSTRAAT
GRACHTEN-GORDEL WEST
ROKIN
OOSTERDOK
OLD JEWISH QUARTER
MUNT-PLEIN
WATERLOO-PLEIN
REMBRANDT-PLEIN
PLANTAGEBUURT
PLANTAGE MIDDENLAAN
Artis Zoo
KINKERSTRAAT
CONST. HUYGENSSTRAAT
LEIDSESTRAAT
LEIDSE-PLEIN
VIJZELSTRAAT
GRACHTEN-GORDEL SOUTH
UTRECHTSESTRAAT
WEESPERSTRAAT
Amstel
AMSTERDAM OOST
Muiderpoort Station
MAURITSKADE
SARPHATISTRAAT
LINNAEUSSTRAAT
Oosterpark
OVERTOOM
Rijksmuseum
MUSEUM QUARTER
STADHOUDERSKADE
WETERINGSCHANS
Vondelpark
VAN BAERLESTRAAT
MUSEUM-PLEIN
DE PIJP
F. BOLSTRAAT
VAN WOUSTRAAT
AMSTELDIJK
WIBAUTSTRAAT
MIDDENWEG
DE LAIRESSESTRAAT
HOBBEMAKADE
CEINTUURBAAN
APOLLOLAAN
OUD ZUID
NIEUW ZUID
OLYMPIA-PLEIN
CHURCHILLLAAN
PRINS BERNHARD-PLEIN
Amstel Station
GOOISEWEG
ROOSEVELTLAAN
Beatrixpark
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PRES. KENNEDYLAAN
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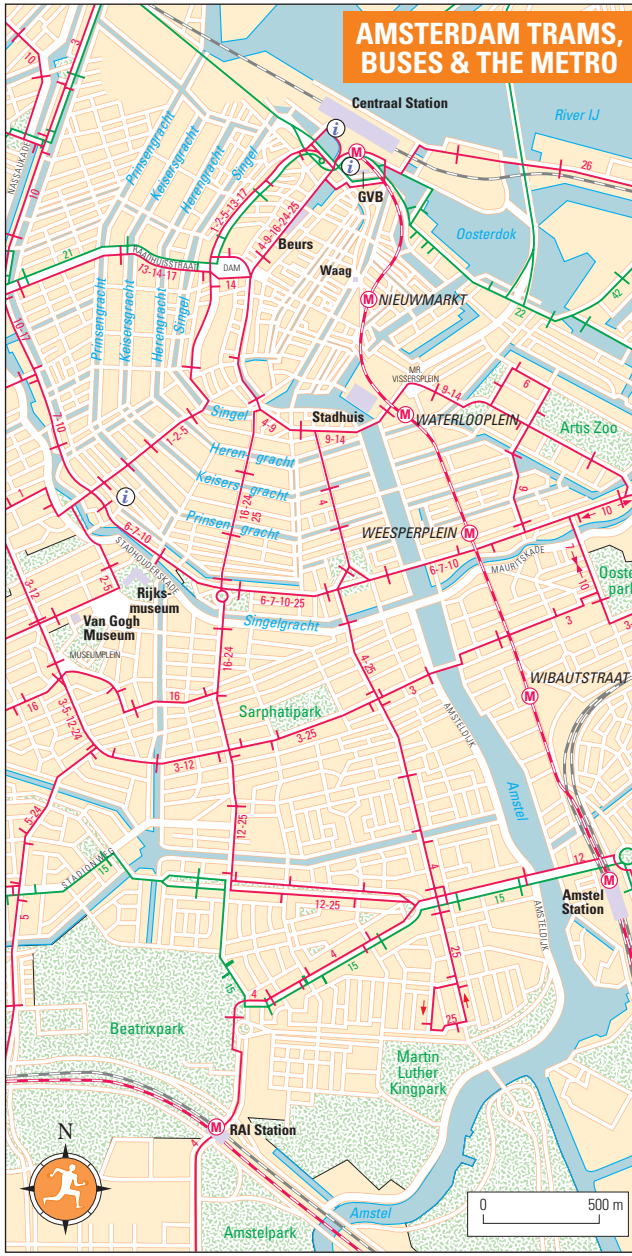


Tram with stop 24

Busline with stop 15

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Bus 18 21 22 32 33 34 35 36 39 42 43 46

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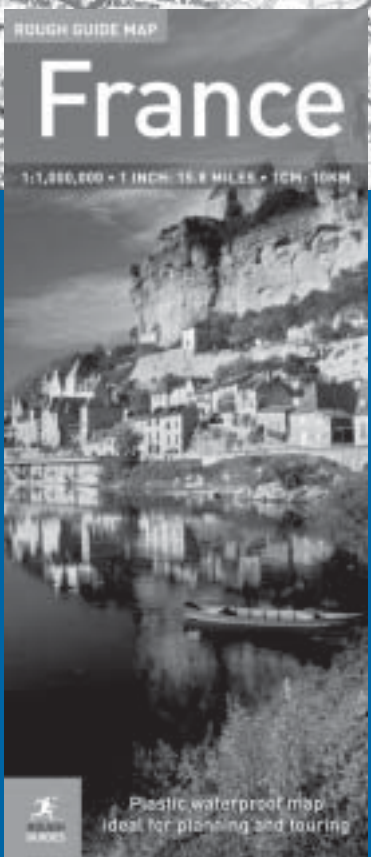


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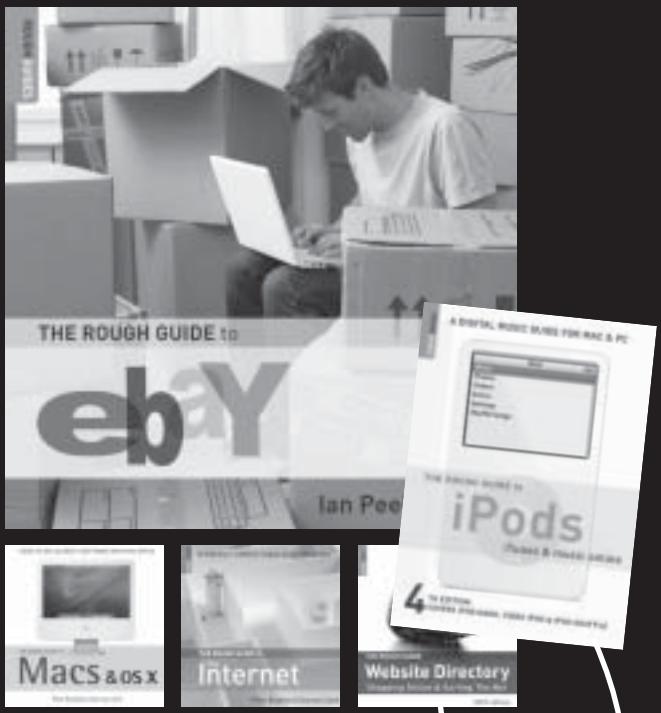


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